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LETTERS ON THE CHURCH.

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LETTER I.

ON THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

MY DEAR ———

ACCORDING to your request, when we last parted, I proceed to lay before you an outline of the principles I maintained, and the arguments by which I defended them, relative to the momentous subject of our discussion, — the character of Christ's Church in general, and the present situation of that branch of it, of which you are a member. I had occasion to observe to you, more than once in the course of our conversation, that the difference between the Mosaic and the Gospel dispensations, — between the two Kingdoms of God, or Churches established respectively among the Israelites and the disciples of Jesus Christ, — is a point to which much less attention is usually paid than the importance of the subject demands. And it is remarkable, that, as the change from the old to the new dispensation was such as to present a stumbling-block to the greater part of the Jews, most especially in so far as it consisted in the substitution of the promises of another world for

those of this life, so a misconception of the nature of that change, in respect of that very point, has given rise to a train of erroneous conclusions among Christians. The Jews, whose religion had been established and maintained by the sanction of temporal blessings and judgments, dispensed by a peculiar providence, and who were thus accustomed to regard temporal deliverance and success as the test of divine favour, (even after they had superadded the belief in a future state) naturally looked for a victorious and prosperous Prince in the Messiah, and were scandalized at being called on to acknowledge, in that character, a person who passed his life in humiliation and affliction, and ended it by an ignominious and "accursed" death. The prejudice thus arising was one which called for the greatest exercise of candour and patience in inquiry to overcome it; and even those passages, in the Prophets, which were calculated to cure that prejudice, seem to have pointed to and foretold it;—to have foretold, I mean, not only that the chosen servant of God was destined to be a sufferer, but also that those his sufferings would be interpreted as a mark of the divine disfavour: "*we did esteem Him* stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him." I am not, of course, seeking to vindicate the Jews in their rejection of the Christ; yet I cannot but think that the mistake under which they laboured was less to be won-

dered at, in the first instance at least, considering that they were familiar with the first dispensation, when the other was altogether a novelty to them, than the error of those Christians, who, while they acknowledge the divine authority of both dispensations, and have the opportunity of studying, leisurely and calmly, the whole scheme of Providence as developed gradually in the entire Bible, yet confound together, in many points, the two plainly distinct parts of that scheme; transferring, in the notions they form, several circumstances interchangeably from the Gospel to the Law, and from the Law to the Gospel; and, in particular, overlooking, in great measure, the distinction just mentioned, between the ancient, and now existing, kingdom of the Most High.

Jesus himself expressly declared that his "kingdom is not of this world;" assigning as a natural consequence and proof of this, that his servants did not fight to save him from being delivered to the Jews. He did not evidently intend to imply that he had no kingdom *in* this world, and that his dominion existed only in reference to the glorified saints and angels in heaven; for in saying that his *servants* did not fight for him, he implied that he *had* servants on earth, who, of course, were, and might be called by an equivalent expression, (inasmuch as he proclaimed his own regal dignity) *subjects* of his kingdom. Nor did he mean, as some well-inten-

tioned Christians have imagined, to prohibit self-defence against robbers or hostile invaders; but that he forbad his followers to fight *for him;* — to support by force the cause of his kingdom; — to have recourse to arms for the maintenance of his authority, and the defence of his religion. "If my kingdom," said he, "were of this world, then would my servants *fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews:* but now is my kingdom not from hence." It is plain, therefore, that the kingdom which he claimed, and in which he gave authority under himself to his Apostles, saying, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me," was a kingdom existing indeed in this world, but not *of* this world; that is, having reference to the next world, — sanctioned by the rewards and punishments of a future state, — maintained by no secular means of coercion, — neither superseding nor combined with, nor in any way interfering with civil government. And not only did he make this declaration before Pilate, — not only did he withdraw from the multitudes who were seeking to "take him by force to make him a king," — that is, to invest him with *temporal* royalty, — but he refused to interfere, when applied to, even in the most minute transaction that related to civil rights, on the ground, not that it was beneath his notice, but that he had *no rightful authority* in such cases. When one came to him, saying, "Master, speak to my

brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," his reply was, " *Who made me a judge* or a divider over you?"

The kingdom of God, on the other hand, which was established among the Israelites of old, *was* " of this world." It was the very reverse of that spiritual kingdom of the Messiah just mentioned, in every point, except that of their being both under the especial government of God. But in the former dispensation, that government and protection were of a temporal character. The Lord Jehovah was the King or supreme Magistrate, as well as the God, of that particular nation; taking upon himself the administration of their affairs, and not only laying down the system of civil policy they were required to observe, but continually enforcing compliance with it by immediate temporal rewards and punishments, either distributed by himself, directly, or by judges and kings whom he appointed and controlled. For this theocracy by no means came to an end, as some have supposed, at the period of the appointment of the kings, though the *administration* of it was relaxed, after the captivity, by the gradual cessation of the extraordinary providence. The application of the title of King, first to Jehovah himself, and afterwards to those human rulers who reigned over Judah, and over the ten tribes, has probably led to the mistake alluded to;— that of supposing that Saul, and, after him, David,

succeeded to the whole of that temporal authority which, under the same title, had been exercised by the Lord. But the history proves that this was by no means the case: for it is plain that the kings not only were appointed and deposed by him, but also were required to conform to his directions, from time to time, as his deputies and vicegerents; and if they disobeyed these, were punished either in their own persons, or in those of their children. The commission given to king Saul respecting the expedition against the Amalekites, and the judgment pronounced and executed upon him, for not precisely complying with the directions given him, may be cited as one instance, out of many, illustrative of what has been said. Now the person who, under whatever title, exercises supreme control over any nation in respect of all their transactions, and enforces his enactments by direct temporal penalties, is evidently the supreme civil governor of that nation.

An attentive consideration, in all its bearings, of the peculiar and extraordinary providence by which the Lord thus governed the Israelites, is sufficient to explain many difficulties, and remove many errors, relating to the Old-Testament-history; which have afforded matter of cavil for infidels, and have perplexed the views of ignorant or inconsiderate Christians.

One of what may be denominated the vulgar

errors that are afloat on this subject is, that the Israelites had, or pretended to, a divine right to wage war against idolaters. They never had, nor professed to have, any such commission or right. Their being expressly sent against certain nations of idolaters, dwelling in one particular country, might alone be regarded, according to the maxim that "an exception proves a rule," as a sufficient indication that they had no *general* commission to wage religious wars. But a more decisive proof of what I have said, is furnished by the express prohibition to make war on the Edomites, who refused them passage through their territory, and who of course were idolaters as well as all the other gentiles. Nor were the Israelites authorized or permitted to take possession of any country which they might prefer, and might be able to subdue. The precise district in which they were to settle was distinctly pointed out; and it was one which was so far from being the object of their choice, that their cowardice and distrust of the divine protection, led them to manifest the utmost reluctance to enter upon it. And when the whole generation which had thus tempted God, were wasted in their long wanderings in the wilderness, and become extinct, their children were summoned to take possession of the very same territory.

Their claim to this territory was founded, not, according to the fanciful notion first broached,

I believe, by Michaelis, on a right of inheritance from Abraham, who possessed none of it, "no, not so much as to set his foot on," (except the burial-place which he *purchased* from the people of the land), but on the best possible title, that of a gift from Him who *made* the whole earth and all its inhabitants, and who has surely an indisputable right to the disposal of any part of it.

As for the utter extirpation to which the Canaanites were doomed, the difficulty which that may present, is one which does not peculiarly affect the Bible-history. An earthquake, an inundation, or a pestilence, are as frightfully indiscriminate in their destruction as the swords of the children of Israel; and such visitations have often befallen nations apparently less proper subjects for such tremendous judgments, than the detestably idolatrous Canaanites, whose foul and bloody abominations were sanctified, and consecrated, and enforced by their false religion. It should be remembered too, that while such natural visitations, as I have alluded to, have often cut off those who had no warning which could enable them to escape, the nations of Canaan, on the other hand, were at full liberty, not indeed to obtain peace by timely submission, but to fly their country, and seek a settlement (as it is supposed some of them did) in other regions, into which the Israelites had no commission to pursue them. And they had no less than forty years' notice that the chosen

people of the Almighty were coming against their land, supported by such miraculous aid as must make resistance hopeless. That they could not be ignorant of this, we might fairly conclude from the circumstances of the case, even if we did not find, in the history, an express assurance to the same effect, in the words of Rahab to the spies.

The cause of the Israelites being sentenced, if I may so express myself, to be the executioners of the severe decree, was, doubtless, that a gross-minded unthinking people, such as they, could not in any other way have been inspired with so strong an abhorrence of idolatry, or so lively an apprehension of the divine judgments denounced against it, as by being engaged in unsparing hostility against those who were cut off for that sin, and being compelled to inflict, with their own hands, the heavy punishment which, they were all along assured, awaited themselves, should they fall into similar transgression; being continually reminded that it was not for their own righteousness, but for the wickedness of those nations, that the Lord drove them out; and being charged not to do any of those abominations, "that the land spue you not out, as it spued out the inhabitants thereof." But, as I have before said, the Israelites themselves were not left to exercise their own discretion respecting the ill-desert of any of their idolatrous neighbours; nor authorized, generally, to put down false religions, and seize on the

property of such as professed them; but received an express and distinct commission against certain particular nations; and had the boundaries precisely marked out, of the land they were to occupy. Those, therefore, who have appealed to, and who have objected to, the Mosaic law, as authorizing, in Christian nations, wars for the propagation of the true faith, or for the chastisement of heretics, must be either miserably ignorant of the Scriptures, or grossly uncandid in the representation they give of them.

The temporal punishment of those among the Israelites themselves who were guilty of idolatry, blasphemy, or contumacious disobedience to the ordinances of their religion, is another circumstance connected with the system of secular government by the Lord, sanctioned by the rewards and penalties of this life; and it is one respecting which many persons entertain such indistinct and confused notions as have given occasion to infidel objections on the one hand, and to corruptions of Christianity on the other In a nation whose supreme civil magistrate is God himself, it is plain, as Warburton and others before him have remarked, that the worship of false gods is high treason,—blasphemy, sedition, and violation of religious ordinances, rebellion against the lawful ruler. To worship Baal and other heathen deities, either to the exclusion of Jehovah, or conjointly with him, who being "a jealous God"

would allow of no divided worship, was not merely a religious offence, but was also a transfer, total or partial, of their allegiance from the rightful absolute sovereign of their own state, to a stranger: an offence which all governments have, naturally and fairly, made capital. So also, to blaspheme Jehovah, or to disobey his positive ordinances, were, under that system, crimes against the state; as being manifestly violations of that duty which all subjects owe to the supreme civil magistrate. In short, the state itself and the church,—the civil government and the ecclesiastical,—were, by the very character of a theocracy, completely blended together, and combined into one.

There was no *alliance* between the church and state; but they were, by the nature of the case, one and the same thing. There was not, nor could be, among the Israelites, any such distinction as that between political and religious duties or offences; the very ground of that distinction being, that the one has reference to the civil magistrate, and the other to the Deity; and Jehovah being, in relation to that particular people, both the one and the other;—their king as well as their God. Obedience to Him, therefore, comprised, directly and immediately, the whole of their duty: and Josephus accordingly remarks, that among the Jews' religion was not, as in other nations, considered as a part of virtue; but, on the contrary, virtue as a part of religion. This,

indeed, it may be said, *ought* to be the case with Christians also; who are required to be influenced in all their conduct, not by the fear of human punishments, but by a conscientious regard to the will of God; and to do every thing "as unto the Lord, and not unto man." But there is this difference, that *temporal* penalties, which in the present day are left in the hands of human rulers, (the extraordinary and miraculous providence which accompanied the old dispensation being withdrawn,) were those which constituted the sole sanction of the law of Moses. No punishments in another world were by that law denounced to enforce the observance of it: so that if a certain class of offences against it could have been distinguished from the rest as of an exclusively religious, and not of a political character, and had been on that ground exempted from temporal penalties, the enactments respecting them would have been nugatory, since there were *no other* penalties; and the Israelites would have been left, in fact, without any religion at all. But in reality it is, as I have just observed, absolutely impossible to draw any such distinction, under a system in which God takes upon himself the office of civil governor;—an office which, by the very definition of it, is exercised by that person, and that person only, who regulates the temporal affairs of any people, under the sanction of temporal punishments.

These considerations, obvious as they are, and not pretending to any novelty, are yet such as can hardly have entered the mind of many persons, both among the enemies and the supporters of the Christian religion: else, we should hardly find the one declaiming so triumphantly against the bigotted, intolerant, cruel, and persecuting spirit of the Mosaic system, on the ground, in reality, of its containing what is an essential part of every other system of government that ever did or can exist; viz. penalties against treason, rebellion, and sedition. Nor should we find Christians so often justifying coercion in religious matters, by the example, totally inapplicable to any other case, of what took place among the Israelites: nor should we find others again, who having imbibed enough of the spirit of the Gospel to perceive that it abhors every thing of the nature of persecution, are manifestly at a loss to reconcile the two systems; and make a kind of apology for the punishment of religious offenders by the civil sword, among the Israelites; as if it were a kind of "concessum propter duritiem cordis,"—an indulgence granted to the narrow prejudices of their judges and kings; applauding at the same time the superior excellence and the mild and forgiving spirit of the Gospel; considerations which, however just and important in themselves, are nothing to the purpose. For example, you may find, in examining the commentators on that

passage in St. Luke where the disciples purpose to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who had refused to receive Jesus, and are rebuked by Him as "not knowing what manner of spirit they are of, the Son of Man having come not to destroy men's lives, but to save," that Tillotson's paraphrase is, "consider what spirit now actuates and governs you; not that surely to which my doctrines design to mould and fashion you; which is not a furious, persecuting, and destructive spirit, but mild, gentle, and saving;..... ..... Ye are not now under the *hard and severe dispensation* of the law, but the calm and peaceable institution of the Gospel," &c. &c.: and Dean Stanhope remarks on the passage, that "as the Gospel is a dispensation of compassion and love, an institution of good to mankind in all their interests and capacities, to promote this Gospel by methods of rigour and revenge, would be to employ means most unsuited to the end," &c. &c. Now these worthy divines are certainly right in supposing that Jesus found fault with his disciples for not understanding the difference between the old and the new dispensations: but it seems very doubtful whether they themselves understood it any better; for one would think they had forgotten that the same God was the author of each institution; either of which it is somewhat rash to call "hard and severe;" or that they imagined the Almighty had become

more indifferent than formerly as to the reception his messengers met with. In truth, the rebuke was not at all directed against an *unforgiving* temper in James and John; since we are only required to "forgive them that trespass against *us*,"—not against any other person; and the offence of the Samaritans having been committed, not against them, but against their Master, was not consequently one which *they* had any *right* to forgive. It has always appeared to me, that such observations as those just cited are entirely irrelevant; and that the whole interpretation turns on the change from the system of *temporal* rewards and judgments, to that of *eternal* ones hereafter, which formed the sanction of the Gospel. In the very next chapter of St. Luke, you find Jesus, in his charge to the disciples whom He sent out to preach, telling them "into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth to us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, That it shall be *more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city*. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" &c. Now we know, that on Sodom *fire did come down from heaven and destroy it;* yet a *heavier* judgment than this was, it seems, incurred by those cities which should reject Christ or his

ministers. I am at a loss to understand how any one that has but read the above passage, can describe the change, which, in fact, consisted in the substitution of eternal for temporal penalties, as a change from a "hard and severe dispensation," to one of a milder character. The fact is, God was, and is, the judge, and the only rightful judge, of religious offences, under both dispensations; and the Scripture gives us no reason to expect that He will, in the one case more than in the other, overlook contumacious disobedience; but, on the contrary, that those will suffer for it the more severely who have been favoured with a greater degree of illumination, and with offers of a more glorious reward. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how *much sorer punishment*, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?"

But while under the Mosaic law, the *temporal penalties*, which were the only ones denounced, were frequently, by divine appointment, inflicted by the *hand of man*; under the Gospel, on the contrary, since its penalties, which are exclusively those of the next world, cannot, from their nature, be inflicted by man, we are accordingly required to abstain from all violent and coercive measures in the propagation and maintenance of the faith.

The few instances which took place, at the

opening of the Gospel-dispensation of extraordinary temporal judgments, by which the divine origin of the religion was vindicated, and which were inflicted through the instrumentality of human agents *miraculously empowered* to call them down, such as the death of Ananias and his wife, and the judgment on Elymas the sorcerer,—these, I say, are of such a character, and also so few in number, that instead of invalidating what has been said, they serve rather to put it in a more striking point of view, by the contrast they present to the general character of the Gospel system: a system whose Author voluntarily submitted to every sort of indignity and cruelty,—to an unjust sentence, and an ignominious death; and prepared his followers, not without need, to endure, unresistingly, stripes, and imprisonments, and every kind of persecution, and a violent death; following the example of their Master, who "did no violence,"—"who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but submitted Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." The disciples of such a Master might well be exhorted to "glory" and think themselves "blessed" in suffering persecution and calumny for his name's sake. With what consistency any of them can employ coercion in religious matters, or inflict civil penalties on religious offenders, let those who do so, explain as they can.

Such conduct has usually been justified on the authority of Scripture, by those who choose to regard Scripture as *one* code of laws: and appeal to the Bible as the word of God, as if it were not many books, but a single one, from any part of which they might select, from time to time, whatever might tally with their own inclinations, and justify their own practices. And when it is considered that the sacred books which we denominate, collectively, the Bible, contain the history and ordinances of two, connected indeed, but distinct, dispensations, which, though they *correspond* in most points, *agree* in very few, it is evident that he who confusedly blends the two systems together, and applies to his own case whatever parts of each may suit his purpose, will be just as likely to mislead, or to be misled, as if the authority he appealed to were false. For it is evident that the Bible, by this mode of consulting it, may be made to say any thing whatever. But those who keep in mind to whom, and under what circumstances, each precept was delivered, will find that there is not the smallest inconsistency between them. The prohibition by Jesus of the employment of any violence in his cause—his refusal to interfere in secular matters,—and his declaration that his kingdom is not of this world, are indeed utterly at variance with the employment of coercion in religious matters by Christians,—with any appeal to civil authority to en-

force the doctrines or duties of the Gospel: but nothing that he said or did was at all at variance with the divine command given to the Israelites to put to death without mercy the idolater and the blasphemer; since he neither denied nor annulled the right of all governments to punish by the civil sword, traitors and rebels; which idolaters and blasphemers evidently were, under the theocracy. That Christ's kingdom is not of this world, is nothing inconsistent with the existence of a former kingdom of God which *was* of this world; nor with the justice of such regulations in that, as are common to all temporal kingdoms whatever.

But religion would be very unlike all other gifts of God to man, if it were not liable to multifarious abuses, perversions, and corruptions. And accordingly, besides all the misinterpretations and misapplications which have been made of single texts of Scripture, by the perversity of man or of Satan, (Matt. iv. 6. and Luke, iv. 9, 10, 11,) entire portions also of the sacred writings have been made to serve various bad purposes, by separating them from those with which they ought to be combined, and uniting them with those from which they ought to be kept distinct. And this is particularly exemplified in those transfers which I have already mentioned, as having been so often unjustifiably made, of portions of the Law and of the Gospel, interchangeably. The Jewish kings,

being God's deputies and vicegerents under a theocracy, were, of consequence, invested with authority over the Jewish church, *as* a church; in other words, with ecclesiastical as well as civil authority: because being deputies and representatives of Him who was at once both the spiritual and the secular sovereign of that nation, their jurisdiction must have been co-extensive with his, except in so far as he might think fit to limit it; and he was so far from restricting them from exercising control (in subordination to his supreme authority) in religious matters, that it is plain he even absolutely exacted of all the rulers, whether called judges or kings, an active and unsparing suppression of idolatry, and of other offences of that class. In fact, the due exercise of the civil authority without the addition of ecclesiastical authority, would have been difficult, if not impossible, in a country where the church and the state were one and the same things;—where God himself was the chief Magistrate. Hence has been drawn the justification of an unwarrantable assumption of ecclesiastical power,—of a jurisdiction extending to religious matters,—by the civil magistrate, in a kingdom of God which is *not* of this world; an usurpation which has taken place, more or less, from Constantine the Great downwards. And as under the Israelitish polity, both civil authority implied spiritual, and spiritual, civil, they being in reality, under such a system,

the same: hence is drawn the authority for the opposite species of usurpation to the above,—the interference of the governors of the church with the affairs of the state; in which the Romish church, though she does not stand alone, has at various times carried her encroachments to the most enormous excess; claiming a right to depose princes, and arming their subjects against them. But the doctrine, that "dominion is founded in grace," and all the extravagances of the "fifth-monarchy-men," and the German Anabaptists, are very much of the same stamp; all having a tendency to make Jehovah's kingdom a temporal one under the Gospel, as it had been under the law;—to "take Jesus by force, to make him a king."

I need scarcely remark how boldly the Puritans, and indeed almost every party among Britons at the period of the civil war, applied to their own affairs passages out of the Old Testament; promoting and justifying every kind of violence and oppression by the authority of texts (of which they easily found enough) relative to the punishment of idolatry and other religious offences among the Israelites, and even to their enjoined extirpation of the Canaanites.

The absurdity of many of the misinterpretations and misapplications of Scripture which belong to the single class I have been considering, is such, that experience alone could convince a

man who really understands the Bible, of their existence. It may safely be asserted, that a corresponding absurdity of reasoning and conduct in the ordinary affairs of life, would be much more than sufficient to convict a man of insanity. Suppose a person professing profound veneration for the laws, and devoted submission to royal authority, should blend together in a confused medley, military law, common law, and the by-laws of particular places; taking into account also, all the temporary acts that have long since expired; and applying to himself on all occasions every command which the king had on any occasion issued to any other of his subjects; would not the half of the extravagance of conduct resulting from such a system, be such as to entitle him to a place in Bedlam? But unhappily, it is that very case in which a correct judgment is of the most awful importance,—in the interpretation of God's word, —that reason is the most frequently and the most extravagantly biassed by all varieties of passions. It is to be expected that men should misunderstand the Scriptures, when they search them, not for directions how they should act, but for a plea to vindicate the conduct they are inclined to pursue. I believe accordingly, that many civil governors who have arrogated to themselves spiritual authority, and have employed coercion in religious matters, have not been, properly speaking, led into this error by a misapplication of the

Old Testament to the Gospel dispensation; but rather, have been led to make that misapplication, in seeking for a scriptural justification of measures dictated by their own inclination.

I would not, however, be understood to attribute even the bitterest persecutions, in all cases, to a cruel and tyrannical spirit. I have no doubt that many sovereigns, whose only fault has been ignorance of the Bible and of the religion it teaches, (no small fault, certainly, in those especially who set up for enforcers and defenders of true religion,) have been led, by a mistaken sense of duty, to employ coercive measures in the cause of what they esteemed orthodox Christianity.

"A ruler," they may say, "is bound to provide in all points for the welfare of his subjects; and as religion is a point of pre-eminent importance, he is more particularly bound to put down, to the best of his power, all religious errors and offences." Paley's reply to this argument has always appeared to me insufficient. He remarks, that "persecution and coercion of every kind are as likely to be resorted to, and may be employed as effectually, in the cause of an erroneous, as of a true religion; whereas, if each cause is left to the support of argument alone, and perfect liberty of conscience and freedom of discussion allowed, truth will be likely, in the long run, to prevail; and that, consequently, since each believes his own religion to be true, all must admit,

the expediency of establishing and adhering to the general rule, that no coercion should be employed in religious matters." I am not transcribing his very words, but I think such is the general drift of his reasoning in that part of his Moral Philosophy which we were some time ago examining together, in which he discusses the question of "Religious Establishments and Toleration." And thus far there is at least much force in what he urges; but the subsequent part of his argument, which is necessary to establish his conclusion, is open, as I think I will be able to evince, to objections which it would be difficult to silence. He contends, in conformity with the principle maintained throughout the treatise, that "each individual civil governor is bound to abstain from coercion in things pertaining to the conscience, whether all others adhere to the same rule or not; on the ground that the consequence of conformity to such a rule would be beneficial, if all men would observe it; and that that is a duty to each, which would be expedient if all men did it;—such conduct, morally wrong, as would be productive of evil, if generally practised." We are to look, according to him, not merely to the *particular* consequences, as he expresses it, of each action, but to its *general* consequences;—the good or ill result which would follow if every one acted in the same manner.

It may be questioned, however, whether this

rule of Paley's can be admitted to hold without any exception; indeed he himself acknowledges that it does admit of exceptions, in cases where the importance of the intermediate consequences overbalances that of the general; as in the instance of pulling down a house without the owner's leave, to stop the progress of a conflagration. And what is more to the present purpose, it may be questioned whether the civil magistrate will not always consider the case now before us as one of the excepted ones. A Popish king, for instance, may say, "I am convinced that salvation is impossible out of the pale of my own church; I am, therefore, both authorized and bound in conscience to employ the most effectual means I can find for maintaining the faith and for suppressing heresy. A heretic prince may indeed think much the same respecting his own faith, and may employ similar means of supporting it; and I may acknowledge that, this being the case, compulsory measures are, on the whole, an evil, and that it would be better for true religion if *all* would renounce them; but *till* this is done, if I were alone to proceed in that manner, I should give an undue advantage to the adversary. War is unquestionably an evil; and it would be a great benefit to the world if *all* states would agree to disband their armies and destroy their magazines; but if I were, on that ground, to think myself bound to act thus, I should expose my subjects

an easy prey to my less scrupulous neighbours. And it is the same in respect of religious liberty; if I put the Protestant and the Catholic on the same footing in my own dominions, while Protestant princes give an advantage to those of their own persuasion, I would not be allowing a fair chance to the cause which I esteem to be that of truth. But even supposing it possible that such an agreement for the renunciation of coercive measures could be brought about, is it quite clear that I would be justified in acceding to it? A heretic prince, we will suppose, is led by, and pleads, my example, in maintaining his own religion by the secular arm: but I am not responsible for his persecution of Catholics, since he, on the contrary, is answerable for the truth of his persuasion, as well as for the means he uses in supporting it: if he would plead my example, let him follow it throughout, and adopt my faith. If he will not do this, then let the one of us who is right, stand acquitted on *that* ground; not on that of conscientiousness; and let the one who is wrong, stand condemned at the day of judgment, not for having employed the civil authority, but for being a heretic. I myself stake my salvation, not on my *believing* myself right in faith, but in my actually *being* so. If the result should be a depression of true religion in my neighbour's dominions, I would bewail this, but I am not responsible for it: were I to permit heresy to flourish among my

own subjects, I *should* be responsible, since they are especially committed to my care. A sentinel would not be justified in deserting the post assigned him by his general, even though he could be assured that the example of his negligence would be followed by ten of the enemy's sentinels, so that the advantage would on the whole be on the side to which he belonged. Suppose you had one son whom you were bringing up carefully in truth and virtue, and your neighbour had ten, whom he assiduously trained in every kind of vice, it is evident indeed that to leave matters to nature and chance would be infinitely better than this latter kind of education, though much worse than the other; but would you on that ground make, or accede to, a proposal, that he on his part, and you on yours, would respectively leave your children to run wild? No conscientious parent would listen to such a condition; even though the result would apparently be a diminution of evil, looking to the whole eleven collectively; because his own child is entrusted to his special care, and his neighbour's not."

If Paley's argument can in truth maintain its ground against such a reply as this, which I somewhat doubt, we may at least be certain that the above reasons would *appear* perfectly satisfactory to any governor whose conduct was of a piece with them.

One of the most popular arguments, I believe,

against persecution, is, that it does not *answer;* that it rouses a spirit of opposition to the doctrines thus enforced, and by the fortitude with which many endure it, impresses others with sentiments favourable to their cause, so that it contributes to the diffusion and confirmation of the religion it strives to suppress. This is true, indeed, of a slight and feeble, or of an irregular, unsteady, interrupted persecution; petty vexations and restrictions exasperate instead of subduing, and rouse men's spirit, without quelling it by terror. Such, accordingly, is the effect which was produced by the penal laws against papists, in these islands, and by the harassing tyranny exercised on the Waldenses, at the present day. And the same is the case with the most bloody severities that are *occasional* or partial. But a government which has both the will and the power to do the work thoroughly, that is, to prohibit the proscribed religion on pain of death or banishment, — to hunt out offenders with steady activity, — and to inflict the penalty with unsparing strictness, will not, I believe, be likely to fail of its object. All history, as well as reason, confirms this. Where are the Protestants of Spain? which produced some of the earliest, the most right-minded, and the most zealous. They were burnt as fast as they appeared, and their doctrine came to an end. God thought fit, for inscrutable purposes, to permit that these "witnesses" against the abomi-

nations of the Babylonish harlot, (Rev. xi. 9,) should, for a time, continue lifeless, and that the kings of the earth should be suffered still to remain, for a season, besotted with "the cup of her abominations."

Much the same was the case with the Lollards in Britain, and the Hussites in Germany; nor can any one doubt that the French Protestants were much diminished by the edict of Nantes, and that if corresponding measures had been steadily and vigorously pursued, there would, at this day, have been none left. What indeed would we Britons have been, at this day, had an active Inquisition been established in these kingdoms, at the dawn of the Reformation, and steadily maintained by successive princes? The Emperor Trajan directed Pliny to make no search after Christians, but to punish them when brought before him. This was the most effectual method that could have been taken for advancing their cause, supposing them originally to have been at all in earnest in it. And the more bitter persecutions of many of the other Roman emperors were partial and temporary; they were such as to rid the church of insincere and lukewarm professors, to illustrate the fortitude of the martyrs who suffered, and to give a specimen of the admirable fruits of the genuine Gospel; but not such as to break the spirit of the Christians by the regular destruction of all who dared to shew themselves. A perse-

cution of this character is like a flood which would by a long continuance have destroyed the vegetation it covered; but by being timely withdrawn, causes it to sprout up with fresh vigour. I doubt, however, whether the severities of those ancient persecutions, far short as they fall of what they might have been, would have been so patiently endured by such multitudes of every age, sex, and condition, had not some supernatural support been bestowed. Be this as it may, the Inquisition has given sufficient proof what effects may be produced, where there is no miraculous aid vouchsafed, by the thorough-going, relentless activity of her who is "drunken with the blood of the saints." Rev. xviii. 3.

I would not therefore recommend to any prince to abstain from violent measures against heresy on the ground that he would thereby defeat his own object, lest he should find on examination that their inefficiency would only be an indication of their not being violent *enough;* and lest he should try whether the flame, which is increased by a gentle breeze, may not be extinguished by a fiercer gust.

On the whole, I confess myself unable to find any argument sufficient to invalidate the force of what has been said, such as I could urge to a Mahometan or a Pagan ruler: but one who professed the Christian religion, and sought to support his faith by the secular arm, I would rebuke

in the words of his Master, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of;" I would urge that Christ himself has expressly renounced all secular authority, and *forbidden* all coercion in the cause of his religion, both by his declaration that his "kingdom is not of this world," (which would manifestly be false, if he authorized the employment of force in his cause,) and by the whole tenour of the religion he founded, by every thing said or done by himself and his apostles, that could in the most decided manner confirm and illustrate that declaration. And I would point out, that the passages of the Old Testament, which have been erroneously adduced in opposition to this doctrine, afford, in truth, a strong confirmation of it, by the relation they manifestly bear to a totally different system; — to a kingdom which *was* of this world, having Jehovah for its supreme Magistrate, administering his government by temporal sanctions. And I would conclude, without fear of refutation, that he who calls in the civil sword to the aid of Christianity, is dishonouring and betraying, instead of serving the cause of a *suffering* Messiah, who when those his sufferings were deprecated by his zealous but erring disciple, solemnly reproved his mistake, saying, "Thou savourest not of the things that be of God, but *those that be of men*;" and who commanded that same disciple to "put up his sword into its sheath."

The brief sketch I now send you, will be sufficient to shew on what grounds, principally, I rest these important conclusions; viz. that the Law and the Gospel are completely contrasted in respect of the sanctions which support them, the penalties being under the one temporal, under the other, those of a future state; that the former kingdom of God was of this world, the latter not of this world, but spiritual; that the employment of secular coercion belongs to, and implies, a government that *is* of this world, and consequently is (in matters pertaining to Christ's kingdom, that is, in religious matters,) inconsistent with the character of the Gospel; that treason, sedition, and rebellion against civil government, may be, and always might be, lawfully repressed by civil authority; that religious offences are crimes of that stamp; under a *theocracy*, and a theocracy only; that God is, under both systems, the sole Judge of such offences, on which punishment can justly be inflicted by none but himself, or persons expressly deputed by him to do so; the kings and other rulers being thus commissioned by him under the old dispensation, whose penalties were temporal, while under the new, from the nature of its penalties, no man is, or can be, commissioned to inflict them; and lastly, that while among the Israelites, their church and state being one, the rulers had, necessarily, (as vicegerents of Him who was both God and King), the

civil and ecclesiastical authority combined; under the Gospel, on the contrary, all claims of the church, as a church, to temporal authority, or of the state to spiritual, — all interference of the one, in civil, and of the other, in purely ecclesiastical affairs, is clearly prohibited, both by the character of the institution, and by the express declarations of its Author.

How far the church of Christ has, at various times, conformed to, or lost sight of these principles, I will consider in my next letter.

LETTER II.

ON THE CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS.

MY DEAR ———

On reconsidering the subject of my last letter, it appears to me that most persons would be likely to regard it as no more than an expansion of the declaration that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; a truth, they would say, so obvious and undisputed, that it is a waste of time to insist upon it. Unfortunately, however, it so happens, that many truths from which men turn aside as stale truisms, are the very principles which lead, by a few steps, to conclusions which the very same persons start at as extravagant paradoxes. And such, I apprehend, is the case in the present instance; the exclusively-spiritual character of Christ's kingdom having been long universally admitted; though it leads to conclusions in which few of his followers have been found practically and constantly to acquiesce.

The kingdom of Heaven which is established by the Gospel, being one which its Founder thought fit to keep distinct from all secular governments,

not interfering with, nor blended with, any civil authorities, ought neither to *employ* nor to *submit* to any kind of coercion. If, for example, a law were made, and enforced by temporal penalties, requiring men to profess, or to abstain from professing, a certain opinion respecting the Trinity, I would call that a violation of the above rule: if the law were enacted by the civil magistrate, I would call it an encroachment *on* the church; if by a spiritual governor, an encroachment *by* the church. This latter species of usurpation, however, can rarely take place without being combined with the former; the ecclesiastical power calling in the aid of the secular, (like the Jewish priests delivering over Jesus to Pilate) that the penalties denounced may be duly enforced.

Thus the inquisitor, after having half-killed by torture a wretched heretic, and then condemned him, *delivers him over to the secular arm*, with a recommendation to mercy, which is understood to mean the stake and fagot. And if for burning, we substitute fine and imprisonment, the *cruelty* indeed would be much less, but the infringement of the fundamental law of Christ's kingdom would be the very same.

One circumstance which greatly contributes to confuse men's ideas respecting a point which is clear enough when distinctly proposed, is, that the same individual persons are, in Christian countries, members of two distinct communities,

whose characters, whose proposed objects, and whose regulations, as well as the sanctions of those regulations, are altogether different; viz. the church or spiritual kingdom of Christ (whose proposed object is the salvation of souls), and the political community,—the state, whether regal or republican, to which they belong, the object of which is the protection of men's persons and property in this world. Now it would seem indeed to require no great share of acuteness, to understand what is meant by a man's belonging at once to several different communities; and to perceive the different duties and relations thence arising: there are, in fact, besides what I have mentioned, various other communities, commercial, convivial, literary, &c., which every one perceives to be established on different principles, to have different objects in view, and to be under corresponding regulations. But the truths which appear the most obvious when distinctly proposed, will often be forgotten or dimly perceived, by the inattentive and unreflecting, when under the influence of any passion. And this is the more likely to happen in the present case, because these two communities, the state and the church, have a reference to some things which are, to a certain degree, common to both. Theft, and murder, and false witness, for instance, are prohibited both by the law of the land, and by the precepts of religion; though on different grounds, by each re-

spectively. The civil magistrate forbids them for the sake of *other men*, that the peace and security of society may be preserved: religion forbids them for *the sake of the individual* himself,—"pro salute animæ,"—for the good of his soul, which the legislator and the judge have nothing to do with; the law, in short, regards them *as crimes;* religion as *sins;* and the one denounces temporal penalties, the other those of a future state. But still, since it so often happens that the same individual act will be forbidden, or will be enjoined, to the same individual person, by *both* institutions, the tendency to confound together the institutions themselves, is thus increased. Since it "is lawful to punish a Christian man with death for heinous and grievous offences," and since such offences *actually are* contrary to his duty as a Christian, hence the unthinking are apt to forget that it is not *as* violations of Christian duty—it is not *because* they are contrary to God's laws, that they ought to receive punishment from the hand of the magistrate; but because they are *political* offences. And if this distinction be once lost sight of—if it be supposed that these crimes call for such secular penalties *in consequence* of their being (what they certainly are) religious offences, the same rule will very naturally be extended to the case of all other religious offences also; many of which, being in reality no civil offences, ought to be regarded as entirely out of the province of

the civil magistrate. And what still increases this confusion in the ideas of those whose reflections are clouded by negligence or prejudice, is, that Christians are not only forbidden by their religion to transgress those rules of *natural morality* of which many are also enforced by the laws, but they are also required, as a point of Christian duty, to obey the laws even in matters that are *naturally indifferent*; "to submit to every *ordinance of man*, for the Lord's sake; the powers that be, being ordained of God," and therefore having (when not contrary to true religion) a claim on the Christian's obedience, "for conscience sake." And some magistrates perhaps think that the state ought to return the service, by making Christianity a part of the law of the land, and regarding every offence against religion as an offence against the law, even as the Apostles make every offence against the law, an offence against religion.

When, then, you consider, that each individual Christian is a member of both communities, the state and the church,—that many things are enjoined or prohibited by the rules of both societies, by the laws and by religion,—that Christianity gives her sanction to all regulations of civil government that are not morally wrong, and that the Bible, so often indistinctly and confusedly regarded as *one* book, exhibits one case of a complete union and amalgamation of the church and state, by divine appointment, (viz. that of the

Jewish theocracy); and when to these considerations you add the natural propensity of all men, especially those in authority, to seek for every possible extension and confirmation of that authority—the civil magistrate thus coveting spiritual jurisdiction, and the spiritual ruler, civil power—it will no longer appear wonderful that the church of Christ should, in almost every age and country, have forgotten, more or less, the great principle which He laid down; that she should so often either have committed or allowed usurpation; either interfering in secular affairs, or allowing secular influence in things pertaining to religion; that she should have been guilty both of *making* encroachments, and of *submitting* to them.

The earliest instance, I believe, that is on record, is the calling in of Aurelius, a *Pagan* emperor, by Christians, to interfere in the affairs of the church by ejecting from the bishopric one Paul, who had been accused of heresy. Afterwards we find Constantine, who is reckoned as the first Christian emperor, but who, in fact, was *not* a Christian, (having never been admitted into the church by baptism till he was on his death-bed,) condescending to exercise the same interference, and depriving the bishops of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, on charges of heresy.

Then began the severest trial by far of the church of Christ; not consisting in freedom from

persecution merely, and in temporal prosperity and wealth, but in the temptation offered, and to which most Christians yielded, of calling in the secular power to decide their disputes, and to give one sect the superiority over another. And from that time to the present day, almost every particular church has erred, more or less, in the same way; by exercising, or, which is the same thing, calling on the civil magistrate to exercise some kind of coercive power in matters of religion; and, of course, paying the price of the protection and support received, by allowing that magistrate, as such, whether he be also an ecclesiastical ruler or not, some degree of control over the affairs of the church. It is the height of folly or of wickedness to teach that Christians may "use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness,"—may "resist the power" which is "the ordinance of God," and claim exemption from obedience to human laws, in things which fairly come under their cognizance; but, at the same time, I contend that it is a sacrilege to exercise secular power in religious concerns, and to attempt enforcing the doctrines and duties of Christianity by the sword of civil government. "Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and unto God the things that be God's." The characters and rights of the two communities should be kept perfectly distinct, although each individual Christian be at once a member of both. It is

indeed a thing to be apprehended generally, that the demands of two different communities upon their members, will be such as to lead to an interference of claims,—to a clashing of duties in those who are members of both. And it is this apprehension, I suppose, which has led many of the governments of Europe to feel a jealousy of the Freemasons; suspecting that the duties required of them by the Society they belong to, may be at variance with those due to the state. But in the case of Christianity, nothing of this kind is to be feared; its requisitions can never interfere with the duties of a good citizen; the things it prohibits are such as no just government will ever enjoin; and in those points which it leaves at large, as matters in themselves indifferent, it inculcates submission to "the ordinances of man." And surely it is one mark of the divine wisdom of its Founder, that when he designed to found a kingdom not of this world—to institute a society perfectly distinct from, and independent of, all secular authorities, he took such effectual care that none of the regulations of his kingdom should in any wise interrupt, or interfere with, submission to lawful civil authority in secular concerns.

But the distinction which was so wisely established and provided for by God, has, in all ages, been, in some degree, broken down by the perversity of man.

The church of Rome has persecuted the most bitterly, and for the greatest length of time, chiefly because she has had the most, and the longest continued *power* to do so, and has existed during the ages of the greatest blindness, and ignorance, and barbarism: and it has been urged, that the right, and even duty of persecution, is one of her most fundamental articles of faith: but what Protestant church has ever, as a body, expressly renounced that right? The Inquisition is a most horrible tribunal; and it is one well accommodated, I confess, to the genius of the Romish persuasion; but it is no necessary *part* of Popery: and why should it not exist in a Protestant country? What disclaimer, for instance, is there, in the articles of the English church, of all *right* to erect or to sanction such a tribunal? What denial of all authority in Christian princes to restrain religious offenders by the civil sword? It is notorious, that persecution, even of the severest kind, did take place under the Reformers, both in Britain and in other countries. The penalties, indeed, for religious offences were, before long, greatly *mitigated*, and in successive ages were more and more lightened: but the question now before us is not respecting the *severity* exercised in any instance, but the *usurpation* committed: if the civil magistrate have *no* rightful jurisdiction whatever in religious concerns, it is quite as much an act of *injustice*, though of far less

cruelty, to *fine* a Socinian, as to burn him. If, therefore, the abolition of capital and of all excessively cruel punishments for religious offences, had been the result of a correct view of the character of Christ's kingdom—of the distinct provinces of civil government and religion,—then, of course, *all* those punishments, *all* exercise of secular authority in such matters, would have been abolished at the same time, and would not only have been in practice actually abolished and withdrawn, but would have been pronounced to *have been in principle all along* utterly unjustifiable: the legislature would not only have *forborne* the exercise of any such interference, but would have disclaimed and protested against any *right* in any one to exercise it. Whereas the very passing of an Act to repeal an Act of this description, implies, that however *inexpedient* the legislature may consider it, they yet regard it as valid and regular till repealed, not as null and void all along; and yet one who acknowledges Christ, and recognises the true character and the rights of his kingdom, must acknowledge that the British king and parliament have no more right to make or to enforce laws for the government of Christ's kingdom—for the regulation, that is, of Christians in their spiritual concerns, than the bishop of Rome or the emperor of Russia has, to make laws for the inhabitants of Great Britain. And I

need hardly add, that as no secular coercion can properly be employed towards those who are the subjects of Christ's kingdom, considered as such, *i. e.* in religious matters, so it would be utterly inconsistent with such a principle, to employ force to *bring* into Christ's kingdom such as are *not* subjects of it — Pagans and Infidels. To persecute men (as the infidel Jews and Heathens did) for *being* Christians, is a violation of the law of *natural morality*, which dictates that no man should be punished by the civil magistrate for any thing which is no offence against society: to persecute men for *not* being Christians, or for not being orthodox Christians, is, besides this, a violation also of the *law of the kingdom of Christ*, who forbade the use of violent means in his cause.

The most common infringement, however, of the great principle which Christ laid down, is the interference of the civil power with the Church itself — with the conduct and belief of Christians considered as such; and this encroachment is, as I have said, equally committed, whether the exercise of such authority be mild or severe. I cannot but think therefore, that Protestants have too hastily exulted in their superiority over the Romish church, in respect of the persecutions she has been guilty of; and which, though in fact she has carried them to the greatest lengths, are yet the natural result of an erroneous principle, *common*

to her with most Protestant churches, — a belief of the lawfulness of employing temporal power in matters which concern the conscience.

It is true that Protestantism is eminently calculated to enlighten and to civilise, and thence, ultimately, to soften and humanise mankind; and has thus contributed, very materially, though in an indirect way, to mitigate the harshness of religious intolerance and persecution in reformed countries. The mere diffusion of general knowledge which accompanies it, has occasioned the civil rulers to perceive more clearly the political inexpediency of religious persecution; while the apprehension of a re-action, such as took place against the tyranny of the Romish hierarchy, has probably operated as a check on spiritual rulers. But much of the improvement which has, in practice, taken place in respect of the point I am speaking of, and which has been attributed, directly, to the principles of the Protestant religion, has, in fact, resulted from causes of a very different nature. I am inclined to think that a very great majority of those who heartily disapprove of all coercion in religious matters, do, in reality, derive this opinion (in itself unquestionably right) from one or both of two very erroneous principles; 1st, a conviction of the *unimportance* of those points of doctrine and discipline respecting which persecutions have arisen; and 2dly, a humane feeling of *compassion* towards the sufferers. Both these sen-

timents are, in the present case, totally irrelevant and misplaced: the former, a persuasion of the indifference of "modes of faith," and of the *consequent* injustice of employing violent means in religion, implies directly that these things are indifferent *in the sight of God*. If false doctrine, heresy, and schism, are to be regarded as such mere peccadillos as not to be *worth* punishing or restraining by the arm of the secular power, we cannot with any consistency believe them to be grievous sins, liable to heavy future judgments. According to this principle, therefore, sincerity must be considered as every thing, and orthodoxy as nothing: Hymenæus and Philetus, whose blasphemies St. Paul so strongly condemns, will be placed (supposing them to have believed what they taught) on a level with Paul himself; the Apostles, generally, who went about preaching the word, will be equalized in God's sight with those who *thought* "they did God service" by killing them; and "the truth," in the cause of which Jesus lived and died, will be accounted a matter of little or no consequence. I scarcely need remark, how utterly at variance such opinions are, both with reason and revelation. And as for the other sentiment alluded to, though the conclusion be right to which it leads, it is entirely out of place, and erroneous. If we are to abstain from the punishment of religious offences out of [illegible] because we should not like to be per-

secuted ourselves, this principle, if followed up, would lead the civil magistrate to withhold punishment from *all* offences, of whatever kind. No one *likes* to undergo penalties, or to submit to restraints, of any kind; but while we admit that all restrictions and punishments which are not called for and authorised by the demands of public expediency, are (however slight they may be in degree) acts of cruelty and oppression; we must also admit, that all which *are* thus requisite for the good of the community, and which relate to matters under the civil magistrate's cognizance, are not to be regarded as cruel, however heavy. The only question is, not, whether coercion and punishment are evils in themselves or not, (which no one surely ever doubted,) but in what cases, and under what circumstances, the magistrate is authorised and bound to employ them. The true account of the matter is seldom given; which is, that though it is no cruelty to inflict, for the public benefit, heavy punishments on "heinous and grievous offenders," and though irreligion and heresy *are* grievous offences, they are not such as fall within the province of the civil magistrate: for them another Judge and another tribunal are appointed.

But it may be urged, is a man to be suffered with impunity to propagate, on the plea of conscience, doctrines which, forming a part of his religion, may be utterly subversive of all morality

and all government? The case is no imaginary one. The Anabaptists of Munster, under Knipperdoling, made polygamy, and perfect freedom of divorce, a part of their system, and set all law, and all established governments, at defiance. Some others, in Germany, called themselves Adamites, renounced the use of clothing, and proclaimed a community of goods and of women. Is the teaching of these and similar doctrines to be tolerated, even in those who do not themselves act upon them, on the ground that heresy and schism are religious offences, and out of the jurisdiction of the magistrate? Certainly not. No one should be permitted, by the civil governors, either to be a thief, or to induce others to be so. Since it never could have been the design of the Almighty, that the secular power should be precluded from self-defence, it must follow, that those who teach doctrines subversive of it, *bring themselves* under its lash; not however as religious, but as civil offenders — as aiders and abettors of crime. But then, the practical ill consequences of any doctrine must be such as are *avowed by the parties holding it, themselves*, not such as are merely alleged, or even proved by their *adversaries*, to be the natural and consistent result of the doctrines. If this rule be not adhered to, a door would be opened for unlimited persecution, since [illegible] for an adversary to deduce, with some [illegible], the most dangerous consequences

from almost any doctrine, as some infidels have lately done with respect to the Christian religion itself. And the opponent of any set of opinions may not only be sincere in thinking that they lead to practical evil, but his arguments to prove such tendency may be just; *i. e.* he may prove that the holder of them must, or may, in *consistency* with his tenets, approve of such and such conduct: yet the other may happen to be so *inconsistent* (according to his opponent's view) as not to perceive or admit any such consequences; so that, instead of inculcating or encouraging such conduct as is deduced from his principles, he may perhaps be a sincere and earnest preacher against it.

I would not indeed say that in every such case *all* the dangers of an erroneous system are completely done away; but it is evident that they must be incalculably diminished. Augustine (commonly designated as a saint) insists upon it, that the heretics he wrote against could not, with such impious tenets as theirs, practice any moral duties aright; and he seems to think that the orthodox were consequently shewing great leniency in allowing them to possess any property, and even to live. And I need not remind you how often it has been proved, perfectly to the satisfaction, no doubt, of the writers themselves, that Calvinism leads necessarily in theory, and may be expected to lead commonly in practice, to an

utter carelessness of life, and disregard of all distinctions of virtue and vice: yet we know that there are, and have been, whole nations of professed Calvinists, who, in successive generations, have not appeared at all below their neighbours of other persuasions in the general tone of their morals. I will not, indeed, undertake to prove that their doctrine has no dangerous tendency; but it must not be inferred that every Calvinist, who may plead this doctrine in justification of the crimes he is committing, (saying, for instance, that he was predestinated to do what he did, and consequently could not help it,) was actually *led* into those crimes as a *consequence* of the doctrine he holds: it is natural to every man to seek an excuse for his misconduct wherever he can find it; but it is possible that this justification may be merely an after-thought, and that the very same man might have been guilty of the very same sin even though he had been of a totally different persuasion.

The ill consequences, however, which are *acknowledged* by the professors of any religion as flowing from it, render it, so far, justly punishable by the civil authorities; and all men may fairly be required, under penalties, to abjure, renounce, and protest against, any such consequences. Papists, for instance, and any others, may fairly be [redacted] disavow the right of the Pope to de-[redacted]; or any other tenet, which, like that,

is *directly* subversive of civil society, or of the moral conduct which is necessary for its temporal welfare. And among others, I think all men may be justly required to renounce the doctrine that coercive measures can justifiably be employed in the service of true religion, and that the civil magistrate has, as such, any control in respect of the purely spiritual concerns of Christ's kingdom.

I would not, again, be understood to deny the right of the civil governor to look to the general *conduct* of bodies of men of whatever description, and among the rest religious communities. If it appear, for instance, on careful and unprejudiced examination, that Papists, or that Freemasons, or that the members of some particular literary or scientific society, are hostile to the government, even though that hostility should not appear a necessary consequence of their principles and institutions, they may justly, with a view to self-defence, be constrained by the civil power. Thus, while there existed a pretender to the British crown, not only the Papists, but the Scotch Episcopalians, on account of their inclination to Jacobitism, became, not unjustly, objects of suspicion to the government; though the religion professed by the latter of these was, and is, the very same which in England is established by law. But still, as it is not on account of religious, but of political tenets alone that they can justly be subjected to the censure of the magistrate, he

who would conform to the spirit of the Gospel is bound to seize the earliest opportunity of substituting, whenever it can be done with safety, political tests for religious; of securing the allegiance of the subject and the temporal welfare of society, whenever it is possible, by any other means rather than by such as cannot but be likely to create erroneous ideas, and to lead to practical evils. For when any religion is proscribed by secular authority, it must always be difficult to keep clearly before men's minds the important truth, that no offences against God alone are justly cognizable before a civil tribunal; that the enactment of temporal penalties, restrictions, and disabilities, for religious delinquencies, *considered as such*, is persecution, and expressly forbidden by the Author of our faith.

But in all such cases as I have mentioned, when such occur, we are bound, for the reasons above stated, to look, not to the supposed necessary consequences of any doctrine, but to the actual and habitual *conduct* of those who profess it.

I have implied all along that the *protection* of any religion by the state (I mean by *compulsory* means) is as much to be deprecated as its persecution. Indeed there is scarcely any difference between the two, as far as regards the encroachment on religious liberty. To punish a man for [illegible] one doctrine, or for not professing ano-

ther; to punish him for not conforming to any particular religious community, or to dictate to that community what shall be their faith and ordinances; are all alike usurpations of that authority which Christ has delegated to no one.

But to this you replied by objecting, "Are then the professors of the religion held by the civil rulers, not to be protected by them from violence —from insult and abuse—from calumny, ridicule, and blasphemy?" Undoubtedly they ought to enjoy this protection, not only of their persons and property, but of their comfort and feelings also. The state is both authorised and bound to prohibit and to guard against, by her own appropriate penalties, not only every thing that may tend to a breach of the peace, but also every thing that unnecessarily interferes with the comfort, and molests the feelings of any one. I say, *unnecessarily*, because it may be painful indeed to a man's feelings to have his opinions controverted, and to be obliged to encounter opponents: but then, free discussion is necessary for the attainment and maintenance of truth. Not so with ridicule and insult: to forbid these can be no violation of religious liberty, since no man can be bound in conscience to employ such weapons: they have manifestly no tendency to advance the cause of truth; they are, therefore, analogous to the slaughter of women and children, and other non-belligerents, which is regarded by all civilised

nations as a violation of the laws of war; these being *unnecessary* cruelties, since they have no direct tendency to bring the war to a conclusion. But it is evident that all this reasoning applies with equal force to the case of persons of *every* religious persuasion, whether Christians of various sects, or Jews, or Mahometans. All of these, though they must be prepared indeed to encounter fair argument, should be protected not only from persecution, but from insult, libel, and mockery, as occasioning a useless interruption of public or of domestic peace and comfort; and this being an offence against society, may justly be prohibited and punished by human laws.

Nor would it, again, be any encroachment on the spiritual kingdom of Christ, if the legislature should think fit to require, as a qualification for certain offices, some kind of *knowledge* of religion as a part of the education of a well-informed man. Europeans in our East Indian settlements are required, as I am informed, to possess some acquaintance with the Koran, and with the sacred books of the Hindoos, as a qualification for certain situations under government: now if it should ever be thought desirable, by the legislature of any state, that a corresponding qualification should be exacted of those who are to take a share in the government, or to administer justice in a [redacted] where Christianity is professed and publicly taught—if they should be required, I mean,

to give proof of some degree of knowledge of what the Christian religion is,—such an enactment would be no violation of religious liberty, no usurpation of spiritual authority; because it cannot be against a man's conscience to acquire such knowledge, provided he is not called upon to make any *profession of faith*—to *assent to*, or *abjure*, any doctrine, or to declare any *opinion* on the subject. To require *that* would be a very different thing. To exact of a member of parliament, or a justice of the peace, to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles, for instance, or to any one of them, would be a departure from the spirit of the Gospel: but to require him to learn them *all* by heart, or ten times as much more, however useless and politically absurd such a regulation might be considered, would be no offence to the most tender conscience of a Papist or a Presbyterian, any more than it is matter of scruple to a good Christian in India to make himself acquainted with the doctrines of the Shaster and the Koran, which are professed by the people he has to govern. Such a requisition would, in fact, have no more to do with conscience, than if it were thought fit to require a diploma from the Universities, or an education at the Inns of Court, as a qualification for office. I believe, also, that in our East Indian dominions the rule is established which I have just adverted to; viz. the prohibition of all open insult and mockery directed against the Mahome-

tan and the Pagan worship. The regulation originated, it is likely, in motives of expediency, that the natives might not be exasperated to rebellion; but it is no less just than politic, whether its justness was or was not considered by the framers of it.

On the same principle, I think that in a country where Christianity prevails, a man is fairly amenable to the laws for openly working on Sundays, and for profane swearing. These are, in such a country, public nuisances and misdemeanors, since they offend and scandalise the feelings of those who witness them: and they must be allowed to be every way uncalled for. No man can think himself bound in conscience to curse and swear; and though he may hold it lawful to labour on the Lord's day, he cannot doubt that it is lawful to abstain. Nor can he complain of the hardship in a temporal point of view—of a restriction common to all his neighbours; and which, therefore, can give them no advantage in the way of business over himself. Besides which, if a man were permitted, and thought fit, publicly to labour in his calling on the Lord's day, it cannot be doubted that he would require those in his employ to do the same; so that the restriction is not only no violation of conscience, but even rather a protection to it. But I would add, *openly and publicly*, because it is the publicity alone that gives the scandal, and

thereby constitutes the nuisance. If any one chose to shut himself up in a private room, and there, secretly, to employ himself in secular occupations all through the Sunday, he would be guilty of no offence that can justly come under the cognizance of the civil magistrate.

These, then, which I have now mentioned, are not properly *exceptions* to the rule, that, under the Gospel dispensation, the secular power has no right to interfere in religious matters, but rather *explanations* of the assertion. The state is bound to protect the persons and property, and to provide for the temporal peace and welfare of its subjects; but for religious offences men can justly be tried and punished by God alone, or by those who have received a commission from him, which no secular magistrates ever did receive, except under the theocracy of the Israelites.

How much Christians of various ages and countries have departed, both in theory and practice, from this principle, I have already briefly and generally hinted. To enumerate in detail all the instances of such departure, would be a tedious and a painful, and, to one at all versed in history, a needless task. To whatever church we turn our attention, with a view to the point I have been considering, we find, whether we look to its past history or its present situation, that in all, or nearly all, Christians have

enacted and approved, if not such laws as imply downright sanguinary persecution, yet religious restriction and coercion of some kind or other—the enforcement of rules, and infliction of civil penalties, not for the temporal peace and comfort of society, but for the benefit of the soul of the individual, and for the glory of God and advancement of true religion.

I shall, in a future letter, examine with this view some circumstances relative to the church of which you are a member; as I consider that not only some things have been practised in it which *are* at variance with the purely spiritual character of Christ's kingdom, but also some others have been thought such, which are not, and have on that ground been exposed to a censure which they do not merit. The line has seldom been accurately drawn, and on just principles; but, to an attentive and candid reasoner, I do not conceive the task to be so difficult as some might imagine.

It will be necessary, however, for this purpose, to inquire first into the character and extent of the authority rightfully claimed by the Christian church; after which I shall proceed to give an outline of the observations I made to you on the alliance of church and state, and on religious establishments.

LETTER III.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

MY DEAR ———

WHILE Jesus Christ not only claimed no temporal sovereignty, but firmly refused to accept it when pressed upon him, he nevertheless asserted his regal dignity: he told Pilate that he was a King, though he assured him that his kingdom was not of this world. And he delegated authority in this his spiritual empire, not to kings or other civil magistrates, but to Apostles, as destitute as himself of all secular power, and as far from claiming any. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you:"—"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: I have given unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained: whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven: and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." I scarcely need remark to you, that these expres

sions imply, not merely a delegation of authority, but also that it was delegated, not to the Apostles alone, as individuals, (since they, as individuals, were mortal, and Christ therefore could not always be with them,) but also to their successors, the bishops and pastors of the Church, whom they, doubtless under the direction of the Holy Spirit, ordained to fill those offices, and who have continued in unbroken succession down to the present day. Nor can it be necessary to reply at length to the empty cavil, that the force of this uninterrupted succession is destroyed by the series having passed through the Romish Church, whose manifold abuses, and whose usurpation of secular power, obliged Protestants to separate from her communion; or rather to make such a reform as induced the Romish Church to withdraw from theirs. It is evident that the misconduct of their predecessors cannot divest them of their right to ordain successors in that authority which was really theirs. If a former king of Great Britain have advanced a groundless claim to the crown of France, this cannot invalidate the right of his descendants, who have renounced that claim, to inherit their own proper dominions.

The power of the Church — the community which Christ established, and which comprehends all individual Christians, as well as their spiritual [illegible] appointed by him — has manifestly no [illegible]m to be acknowledged of divine origin,

than that of the Jewish theocracy; nor has, consequently, any less title to reverence. The superstitions, however, of the Romish hierarchy were so palpable and monstrous, as to produce a reaction in the sentiments of Protestants, who have always been disposed to regard with jealousy all exercise of a power which had been so shockingly abused, and, in some instances, even to set it at nought altogether. Such is human nature, that we are always liable to fall from one extreme into another, and to condemn the use of that whose mischievous abuse we have experienced. But "the Church" (that is, the Catholic or universal Church), certainly is not, as some seem to regard it, merely a collective *name* for all who happen to agree in certain opinions, like the names of "Cartesian" and "Newtonian;" but is a society, or body-corporate (if I may use such an expression), of divine institution, compared by St. Paul to a natural body, and of which all individual Christians are members, having a certain relation to each other, and to Christ, their Head.

There are manifestly two ways in which the governors of the Church may exceed their commission, though the distinction is one which is generally overlooked. Their power being both restricted to its own proper province (viz. spirituals), and limited even within that province, it is evident that to transgress the appointed boundary, in either way, is to assume an authority which

does not belong to them. Christians have not (considered as Christians) any secular power; their governors, that is, their spiritual governors, bishops and ministers, have no right, as such, to interfere in civil transactions, nor to employ coercive means of any kind. But it is plain that the Church may abstain from all encroachments of this kind — may refrain from all usurpation of secular authority, and yet may be guilty of an usurpation of the other kind, by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," by imposing new conditions of salvation, by inculcating as indispensable articles of faith such dogmas as are not warranted by Scripture. The former of these offences may be properly designated as an encroachment on the *state*, being an assumption of that temporal jurisdiction which belongs to the civil magistrate: the latter is a direct encroachment on the authority of Christ himself, who has revealed to man, in the Holy Scriptures, the truths which he requires us to believe as a condition of salvation. This latter offence may be compared to that of a subordinate magistrate who encroaches on the royal prerogative, by subjecting those under his control to unauthorised enactments of his own: but if he take upon him to assume power over those *not* placed under his control, or to violate a foreign territory, his offence corresponds with the former kind of usurpation — the interference [illegible] ual ruler with secular affairs.

What then, it may be asked, are the limits of the spiritual authority with which Christ has intrusted the vicegerents of his kingdom? If you were to answer according to the doctrines of your own church, I should, if I rightly understand her meaning, fully coincide with you. The Church (according to the Articles) has power to ordain, alter, and abrogate, rites and ceremonies, as she may think most conducive to good order, decency, and edification: and she has authority in matters of faith, though not such as to permit her to impose articles of belief not warranted by Scripture, nor to interpret one passage of it so as to contradict another. To allow the Church this latter power, would be to supersede the Scriptures, by teaching men to look to her, and not to them, to know what God has revealed. To deny her the other power, would be to supersede the use of the Church altogether, since if those things which are in the Scriptures left at large, such as the mode, for instance, of celebrating the Lord's Supper, the times and places of joint religious worship, &c. — if these, I say, unspecified points, which *must* be determined by some one, are not to be determined by the Church, in each country respectively, the very purpose for which Jesus Christ instituted this society is defeated, since, if she has any authority at all (which he expressly gave her), and has none in matters determined in Scripture, she must have it in things *un*deter-

mined in Scripture. And it should be remembered, that the *lowest* interpretation (and I think the right one) which can, with any shadow of reason, be put on the expressions of the "keys," and "the remission and retainment of sins," is, that spiritual governors may, at their discretion, admit men within the pale of the visible Church, exclude offenders from it, and restore them on submission.

The distinction drawn between "power to *ordain* rites and ceremonies, and "authority in matters of faith," seems to me perfectly reasonable, supposing, I mean, that I interpret the Article correctly. In matters of discipline, the positive institutions of the Church *make* things right and wrong which were left undetermined in Scripture; such as the observance of religious festivals, forms of public worship, administration of the sacraments, and things of that nature. And to disregard the authority of the Church in matters of this description (I mean, of course, in such cases where there is nothing ordained that is against Scripture), — to consider things which were originally indifferent as indifferent, *after* the Church has enacted regulations respecting them, is an offence against Christ himself, the Head of that body; not so *great* an offence, I allow, as direct rebellion against his own immediate commands, but as *truly* an offence. For Christians should remember, that they cannot

obey, in many instances, even the express commands of Scripture, unless they comply either with some kind of ecclesiastical discipline, or with some unauthorized devices of their own, instead. Our Saviour expressly commands the celebration of the holy communion, and St. Paul, the assembling of Christians, for the purpose of prayer and religious exhortation. Now these things must be done in *some* time, place, and form, if the commands are to be obeyed at all; and if each follows his own fancy, in these points, there will be "divisions among Christians," "they will come together, not for the better, but for the worse," like the disorderly Corinthians, of whom every one had a Psalm, had an exhortation, had an interpretation, &c. which led to confusion and discord, all which are expressly forbidden in Scripture itself. It seems impossible, therefore, for an unprejudiced mind to doubt that Christians are bound to "obey them that have rule over them, and esteem them very highly for their work's sake," and that Christ established a spiritual society, with spiritual officers over it, for the express purpose, among others, of regulating things of this nature, which *must* be regulated in some way or other; from which it follows, inevitably, that such regulations of the Church have the sanction of his authority; that "whatsoever they shall *bind*, or loose, on earth," that is, whatever ordinances and decrees of this kind they

establish or abrogate, "shall be bound or loosed in heaven;" that is, such their decisions will be ratified and confirmed by Him, their Master, in heaven. And, accordingly, although it be in itself morally indifferent, for instance, whether the communicants receive the Lord's Supper standing, kneeling, or (as the Apostles did at the institution of it) lying down, or in any other posture; yet in each branch of the Church of Christ that posture ought to be used, as a point of reverent obedience to Him, which is there prescribed by his ministers. It is not even expressly declared in Scripture that this sacrament should be administered by the priest or spiritual elder; but it is evident, that for the sake of that decency and good order which are distinctly enjoined by St. Paul, *some* persons must preside at the celebration; and ordained ministers seeming to have the fairest claim to be selected for this office, the Church has, accordingly, in all ages, I believe, assigned it to them, which appointment, therefore, ought to be regarded as one of the things which are "bound in heaven," — which have their sanction and ratification from Christ himself.

The authority of the Church in matters of faith, is a point of greater nicety, and in which it is impossible to draw the line so accurately. It is evident that the decision of the Church does not, in this, as in the other case, *make* any thing right or wrong; she can only *declare*, from the

Scriptures, what are the Christian doctrines and duties, and declare this by a fallible judgment. But there can be no doubt that this society was instituted, in part, for the purpose of preserving and teaching the true faith, in subserviency to the Word of God. The Church, both pastors and their flock, being but fallible, may err in their deductions from it, and no man ought to assent, on human authority, to any doctrine or practice which he may be convinced *is* thus erroneous, supposing, always, that he have attentively considered the question, and allowed due weight to the numbers, the learning, or the sound sense of those who may think differently from him. But there can be no doubt, in any candid mind, that the ministers, and other such members of the Church as have power and opportunity, were designed by their Founder to have the office of teaching the Christian religion in a regular and systematic form, to their children, and others, who may need instruction. There are some very just remarks to this purpose, in a little work on Christian Tradition, which I saw at your house, by a Dr. Hawkins, if I recollect rightly, of Oxford, in which the Author remarks, that the New Testament Scriptures are evidently not calculated, nor could have been intended, to convey to learners, the elements of the Christian faith, all the books of which it consists having been written for the use of Christian converts, and that there-

fore it must have been the intention of Jesus Christ that the Church he established should have the office of drawing out and setting in order, with a view to *instruction*, the truths of the Gospel, referring to the inspired writers for the *proofs* of every thing advanced; the error of the Romanists consisting in their claim of *authority* for their tradition, independent of Scripture, and, in many instances, superior to it.

But though the spiritual rulers, and other members of the Church, can claim no infallibility, but are bound to make a constant appeal to the Bible, and to rectify every error they may detect, they must be also bound to do their utmost to maintain, in its purity, what they are convinced, to the best of their judgment, is Gospel-truth; to "hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints." Fallible though they must be, after all, they must not only use their best endeavours to ascertain the right sense of Scripture, and to instruct men in sound doctrines, but they must also preserve those sound doctrines, and enforce corresponding practice within the Church, by excluding from the society all such as are incorrigibly faulty in either point. This is not merely authorized, but expressly commanded in Scripture. St. Paul charges his churches to "reject, after the first and second admonition, a man that is an heretic;" to "mark those that cause divisions among them, and avoid them;" not to

associate with such as "walk disorderly;" to withdraw from the society of any one who disobeys his (Paul's) injunctions, "that he may be ashamed;" and if any "one that is called a brother (that is, a Christian) be a notorious evil-liver, with such an one not even to eat." Indeed Christians would commit a worse offence than the heretic himself, (supposing him *sincere* in his error,) if, while convinced of the falsity and danger of his doctrines, they yet lent him their countenance, and left him opportunity of infecting others. The very notion is absurd, of a *society* whose members disagree as to the fundamental principles on which it rests, and the objects it proposes. It would be like an assemblage of mariners in a ship, who could not agree as to the direction in which it should be steered. Nor again, can any society subsist, at least to any beneficial purpose, unless its members comply with the regulations essential to the attainment of its proposed objects. The Church, accordingly, is bound, as indeed St. Paul enjoins, to enforce on her members the observance of her rules, whether founded on the principles of natural morality, or on positive ordinance. And as this enforcement must not be by violent means, the last resort of the Church, when admonition and censure fail, — her "ratio ultima" must be, exclusion from the society; in other words, excommunication. This term sounds harshly, partly

from its association with the abuses of the Romish Church, and partly from the *secular* penalties which in many Protestant states have been superadded; but these are no *part* of excommunication, which means simple rejection from the society, which it would be most unreasonable for one to complain of who wilfully and pertinaciously infringed the regulations of that society. The celebration, for instance, of the Lord's Supper, is one of the ordinances established by the Author of our religion, and made binding by Him on all his subjects. The particular Church to which you belong has prescribed a decent and solemn form for this celebration, and requires every one of her members to attend on it (unless there be a reasonable cause to the contrary), "at least three times in the year, whereof Easter be one." Now any one who will neglect to comply with this regulation, and who, on being admonished by the minister, will yet, without any reasonable excuse, persist in absenting himself, is a wilful and deliberate violator of an essential law of the kingdom of which he is a subject, and this, equally, whether his non-compliance proceed from disbelief of the universal obligation to obey that command of Christ, or from determination to persist in a life of sin, or from any other cause. Such a person, therefore, has forfeited all right to retain his place in that community: its officers are clearly bound to expel him. Will this be

called an undue assumption, or a harsh employment of authority? I would be glad to know whether there is any other voluntary society, literary or scientific, — any club, that does not do the same? There is not even an association for purposes of amusement or conviviality, which has not its regulations and standing orders, and which does not exclude from the list of its members those who pertinaciously refuse compliance with them, or which is ever censured for so doing, however frivolous the regulations themselves may be thought. And the reasonableness of this is obvious: it is that those who *choose* to become, or to continue, members of any such club or institution, should make up their minds either to conform to the regulations to which they have thus freely subjected themselves, or else to withdraw.

So also in the case of Christian ecclesiastical discipline, it is absolutely essential to its character, that it be *voluntary;* that no one should be subjected to it except by his own choice. The Christian Church has no secular power — no right of absolute coercion; she has indeed no divine authority whatever, except *over her own members,* as long as they continue to be such by their own choice, and claim rights appertaining to them as such. To *compel* any one to become, or to continue, a member, would evidently be to extend the Church's authority to those exempt

from it,—authority of a secular character. The aliens from Christ's kingdom, and the rebels against his dominion, are to be judged by himself alone; the authority he *delegated* to the pastors of his flock, extends only to those who choose to remain within the fold. *In the sight of God*, indeed, every one who has once been made a member of the Church, must ever remain a subject, though he may be an unworthy and rebellious subject of the kingdom of heaven, since no one can by his own act and deed throw off rightful allegiance; but it is in God's sight alone that he is thus to be regarded: the visible Church on earth are no longer to regard him as one of their members. "If he *refuse to hear the Church*, let him be unto you as a *heathen* man and a publican."

I believe that the disregard of this distinction has led to much confusion in the judgments, and error in the conduct, of both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Because every Christian is necessarily, and can never cease to be, a member of Christ's Church, (which before God and his own conscience certainly is the case) and because her purely spiritual denunciations cannot restrain or recall one who resolves to disregard them, hence the secular power has been called in, and coercive means employed, to enforce the mandates of the Church on a refractory or apostate member, towards whom her admonitions are become powerless, but who, nevertheless, still *is* a member.

And it is on this ground, if I recollect right, that some of the Romanists, while they disclaim the right of persecuting *Pagans* or *Jews*, insist on that right with respect to *heretics;* contending that the one are aliens, but the other rebellious subjects, and consequently punishable by forcible means. And it is true, they *are* rebellious subjects in the sight of God, but the authority of the *Church on earth* over them ceases on their expulsion from it; she is charged, expressly, by her Founder, to regard such in the light of *heathen* men; that is, aliens, with whom they have no religious connexion. In short, the authority delegated by Christ to the officers of his kingdom, must extend over such only as they can restrain or correct *by the means he has permitted* them to use; now these means, since they are exclusively spiritual, (all forcible methods being expressly forbidden) can have no influence on any one who, "refusing to hear the Church," is excluded from her communion; it follows, therefore, inevitably, that such an one ceases from that time to be under her jurisdiction (though, of course, he continues responsible to his Master), till he voluntarily return and make submission.

In this respect, there is a coincidence between the Jewish Church and the Christian, since the former also claimed no jurisdiction over mankind at large; neither having, nor pretending to (as

I formerly remarked to you), any commission to put down idolatry in other nations, and compel them to observe the law of Moses. No idols, indeed, were to be permitted in the very land itself, which was altogether holy to the Lord; but even within that territory, hired servants, and other strangers, were permitted to dwell, not only without being required to conform to all the Mosaic institutions, but without being even permitted to celebrate, for instance, the passover, unless, at their own desire, they were initiated into the Church of Israel.

Wherein then consisted, it may be said, the difference, in respect of this point, between the two Churches? Evidently in this: that every individual of that *nation*, all the children of Israel, were necessarily members of that united Church and State; they had no more *liberty to quit* it, than the subject of any other secular government has to renounce his obedience to it. It was a temporal kingdom, and therefore its regulations were very suitably enforced by temporal penalties, and, in the last resort, by death. The Christian Church, on the contrary, is not confined to one nation, but all men are invited, though no one can be, by coercive means, compelled to join it. Every one indeed is bound to do so, who hears the invitation, at his own peril, and is also bound to walk worthy of his vocation;

but the penalties under which he is so bound, are not such as man is empowered to inflict; they are those of the next world.

Persuasion and remonstrance,—the "meekness of instruction,"—are the engines by which the Gospel "fishers of men" are to seek for converts, and to retain those of whom they have possession. I need hardly stop to refute the absurd justification of violent measures, which some Papists have drawn from a literal interpretation of the expression, "compel them to come in;" which is a natural, and indeed usual way of speaking of an earnest and pressing invitation. In fact, the very word I have just used might with as good reason be interpreted literally, as implying the use of force; and thence it might be inferred, that if any one was said to have *pressed* his friend to stay and dine with him, this must signify that he employed a press-gang to detain him by bodily force. Such an interpreter too must think himself bound to believe that violent means were used towards Jesus by his two disciples, who, after the resurrection, when "he made as if he would have gone further," (Luke, xxiv. 28,) are said by the Evangelist to have "*constrained* him" to abide with them.

But though the Christian Church has no authority to *compel men to come in*, (as no society not possessing secular power can have,) she *has* authority, as every *free* society must have, to

compel them to stay out. And she evidently has a right to inflict on her offending members any kind of punishment she may think fit, they having always the option of undergoing it, or quitting the society. The primitive Church seems to have been sufficiently severe with those whose apostacy, immorality, or heresy, had given offence, being naturally desirous, as placed in the midst of foes and slanderers, not only to adhere to the principles of the society, but also to refute the calumnies of "those that were without." We read, accordingly, of long and painful penances imposed on the more grievous offenders, and of their gradual re-admittance after passing through several distinct stages of humiliation. First, they were only allowed to stand at the door of their place of worship; then to be admitted within it as "prostrate," lying prostrate during the service; next, as permitted to stand up, but in a distinct place; and lastly, after being admitted to an equality, in other points, with the rest of the congregation, as being still excluded from the communion of the Lord's Supper, till a further period had elapsed. The bishop had the right of modifying and remitting these penances, according to the degree of penitence in the offenders; but we may suppose, that one who knew that he put his life in jeopardy by accepting the episcopal office, was not likely to be remiss or over lenient in these matters. If any chose, as it was likely

many would, to remain excluded rather than submit to such penance, there was no remedy: "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart." But afterwards, when the civil magistrates were Christian, a remedy seemed to present itself. Considering that it was desirable (as it certainly is,) that every such offender should make submission, and seek to be reconciled to the Church, and forgetting (what is equally true,) that this is desirable only when such submission is unforced, the secular authorities endeavoured, literally, to "compel them to come in," and denounced temporal penalties against spiritual offenders, to back the censures of the Church by the civil sword, thus striking at the root of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and incurring his rebuke, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," no less than those disciples who proposed to chastise, by fire from heaven, the impiety of the Samaritan village. For in any point that affects the present question, let any one draw a distinction between the two cases who can. The language of the Church, in primitive times was, what it ought to be always, and what that of all other voluntary societies is: "join our society, or not, as you please; quit it when you please: but *if* you *choose* to belong to it, you must practise and submit to all that it appoints."

In an evil hour did the Church first employ the "arm of flesh" to enforce her decrees. Every

church which does so, in the same degree in which she does it, is transgressing the fundamental law of a kingdom which is not of this world; and she never fails to weaken her own proper spiritual authority in the same degree. Deservedly is she crippled, like David clad in the false protection of Saul's armour, which, instead of defending him, served only to impede his motions. Let her cast it off, and go forth, like him, in the name of the Lord, and with a sling and a stone she will quell the gigantic force of the uncircumcised!

I have said that the Church is crippled rather than protected by this unfitting aid. Her own legitimate authority is impaired by calling in the help of the secular power. In the case, for instance, which I have been just now speaking of, that of excommunication, the civil penalties and disabilities *annexed* to it, prevent you from inflicting it when you ought. The sentence involves a man's civil rights, over which it is the duty of the state to watch. He has therefore a right to appeal to the temporal power to try the justice of his sentence, and you are liable to have it reversed by an extraneous authority. But suppose it confirmed, it is an odious and unpopular thing for the governors of the church to interfere with the rights of the citizen. I mention this, not as being really the main objection, but as being, in practice, the one which I believe the

most frequently operates to prevent the passing of such a sentence. The real objection is, that since it involves a temporal penalty, it is essentially *unjust:* it is not merely *considered* as persecution, but it actually is such. And thus it is, that in a multitude of cases you become actually *bound,* as a duty to your great Master, to excommunicate, and *not* to excommunicate, the very same individual. Suppose him a grievous offender, as a heretic and breeder of divisions in the Church, you are clearly bound by St. Paul's injunction, if he continue in the offence, "after the first and second admonition, to reject him;" yet again, since in so doing you subject him to the temporal penalties annexed, with your consent by the civil power, to excommunication, it is equally plain, that you are bound, by the prohibition of all persecution, — that is, all employment of coercion in religious matters, — to abstain from pronouncing that sentence. And the same takes place in a multitude of other instances; so that it is matter of absolute demonstration that the *Church* cannot possibly, when thus aided by the secular power, enjoy and exercise the authority which Christ has given her, according to his intentions.

It is not the State, but the Church, — not the temporal, but the spiritual governors, that are to be blamed for these ill consequences. Ignorance of the character of Christ's kingdom is surely more excusable in a civil magistrate than in an

ecclesiastical ruler. If these last do not refuse and protest against — much more if they invite — the interference of the other in spiritual concerns, they are responsible for the results of such interference. And one of these results, which is inevitable and obvious, is, that you thus resign the independent authority of the Church. By borrowing the power of another, you give up part of your own: having called in the aid of the secular arm you have fully authorised the state to watch over and control your administration of that discipline which is backed by her authority. The civil power has given you, as it were, the protection of a garrison of her own soldiers, commanded of course by her own officers, who owe allegiance to *her:* what sort of independence, think you, does a city enjoy which has the *advantage* of such a foreign garrison? The Church, in short, is thus placed in the condition of the horse in the fable, who, for the sake of chastizing his enemy the stag, called in to his assistance a man, whom he suffered to mount on his back, and who found him ever after a very useful slave. The civil power, in like manner, when once called in as an ally, may be expected to keep its seat, and after having helped to put down heretics and schismatics, to employ the Church for its own purposes.

The only exception to this rule is the converse case; that of the Church prevailing over the

State, by contriving to encroach on the secular power to a greater degree than the secular power does on her, till in time she is able to assume a complete temporal dominion. Thus it is that that adulterous church, the Babylonish harlot, seated herself "on the *back of the Beast*," and succeeded in establishing that monstrous and impious anomaly, a secular hierarchy—a kind of false Theocracy—the empire of the popish see. But this case differs, in fact, but very little from the other, as far as the present case is concerned: when the ecclesiastical and civil powers are intermixed, and their several provinces confusedly blended together,—when mutual interference and encroachment have taken place, it signifies comparatively little which of the two parties gains, on the whole, an ascendency over the other: the principles of Christ's spiritual kingdom are equally violated by the usurpations of the Church or of the State on each other's dominions; nor can any particular church expect that He "will be with them always," and bestow his full blessing on their transactions, as long as they, on their part, are not completely "with Him;" as long as they do not fully comply with his injunctions, by trusting to Him alone whose "kingdom is not from hence."

The Church may, indeed, as I have said, demand protection for her members, by the civil power, not only from persecution, but from insults

and libels; but then this is demanded for them, not as orthodox Christians, but as peaceable citizens,—a Mahometan or a Pagan having an equal right to it. And the State may require, in return, not only of *Christians*, but of *all* her subjects, both that they would obey her laws, and also that they would abstain from inculcating disobedience to her, and resistance to the "powers that be." Every assumption, by either community, of any thing beyond this, is an encroachment on the rights of the other.

It may be said, however, and has been said, that though the two societies are distinct, and are naturally and originally independent of each other, so that neither of them has any natural *right* of control in the affairs of the other, they are yet competent, like any other two societies, to form an *alliance*, and to concede each to the other some part of its own rights in exchange for some of those belonging to the other party. This opinion I will consider in my next letter.

LETTER IV.

ON THE ALLIANCE OF CHURCH AND STATE.

MY DEAR ———

I REMARKED in my last letter, that two independent or sovereign communities may be competent to form an alliance for their mutual benefit, by agreeing to impart to each other, reciprocally, some portion of their respective rights. Thus, two independent states, for instance, though neither of them has originally any claim on the territory of the other, may agree, the one, we will suppose, to allow the other a right of way through her dominions, and the other, in return, the use of her shores to the mariners of the first, for drawing up their small craft, landing their goods, and drying their nets. And if one of these contracting parties should think fit, in exchange for defence against an enemy, or support during a famine, to resign to the other her independent sovereignty, and to be enrolled thenceforth as a province of it, no one could dispute the lawfulness and validity of the contract.

The question now before us is, whether the

Church and the State be communities which may *allowably* form such an alliance? The question as to the *expediency* of such alliance must present itself in the second place to those who decide the former question in the affirmative; if *that* be decided in the negative, the question of expediency is superseded.

Bishop Warburton is allowed, I believe, to be the most powerful advocate for the alliance of Church and State. Dr. Paley (who, however, is favourable to an *established* religion) is unconvinced by his arguments, though he does not enter into any particular examination of them, but merely contends generally, that all attempts "to make the Church an engine, or even an *ally* of the State," are at variance with its fundamental principles.

As I am about to enter the lists against so able a champion as Warburton, it may be proper to point out, in the first instance, the strong coincidence which exists between our opinions with respect to most of the principles I have already laid down, though they have led us, in the point now under consideration, to opposite conclusions. Indeed, I have actually borrowed from himself many, and may appear to have borrowed more, of the very arguments which seem to me to weigh against his theory. In the first book of his "Alliance" he remarks (pp. 50, 51), "In after ages, when the Roman emperors became Christian, agree-

ably to the zeal of new converts, they made the *civil* institutes *religious*, by introducing laws against *sin;* in which, as they were told by their teachers, they were not only authorised, but directed, by the examples and precepts of that Scripture which they professed to believe. This greatly contributed to confound the distinction between a Church and State. However, this false judgment did not owe its birth to the *Christian* religion, where this distinction is so marked out and enforced as not easily to be mistaken, but to the *Jewish*, in which those societies were consolidated, and, as it were, incorporated. For there they saw, in a civil policy instituted by God himself, and, therefore, to be esteemed most perfect, and, of course, worthy the imitation of all magistrates who professed themselves the servants of that God,—they saw, I say, *sins* and *crimes* equally within the magistrate's jurisdiction. They did not reflect, that *that* jurisdiction was the necessary consequence of a Theocracy, a form of government different in kind from all human policies whatever." In p. 62, he says, "Religion thus composing a society, we are now to consider what kind of society it is. First, then, it must needs be sovereign, and independent on the civil." And p. 65, "*this independent religious society* hath not, in and of itself, any coercive power of the civil kind; its inherent jurisdiction being, in its nature and use, entirely different from that of the

State." P. 67, "As the immediate end of religious society is purity of worship; and as a necessary means of preserving that purity is *uniformity of worship*, which cannot be maintained but by expelling from the community all who refuse to comply with what is publicly established, therefore *this power of expulsion in every religious society is most fit and useful.* But we go farther, and say, that every kind of society, whatever be its end or means, must necessarily, as it is a society, have this power of expulsion: it is a power inseparable from the very being of society, which can subsist only in the conformity of the will of each natural member to the will of that artificial body which society produces; this being violated, as it must be unless all contraveners be expelled, the society dissolves, and falls back again into nothing." P. 68, "*More* coercive power than this is *both unfit and unjust* to be exercised by a religious society."

Thus much may suffice to shew that I have neither the arrogance to disregard the opinions of so illustrious a writer, nor the misfortune to differ from him altogether.

To examine in detail every part of the ingenious work in question, would require a considerable volume: nor is it at all necessary for my purpose to do so; since, in fact, a very great proportion of his arguments tend, as I shall presently shew, to establish my own conclusion.

They have the effect of knitting and compacting together the several parts of his system so firmly, that if any part of it be demolished, the whole must fall together. He proves so satisfactorily what consequences flow from the alliance of Church and State, that if even any one of these consequences can be shewn to be destructive of the character of Christ's kingdom, the lawfulness of the alliance itself is overthrown by a "*reductio ad absurdum.*"

It may be advisable, however, to suggest some further considerations (though without professing to exhaust the subject) beyond what is in strictness necessary to prove the point in question, and to point out some ill consequences, not contemplated by Warburton, but which have actually resulted, and must always be expected to result, from the system he is defending.

Before I proceed further, however, it may be as well to premise one remark (though in so doing I anticipate part of what will presently be said), which may be necessary to obtain a hearing for my arguments; not from *you*, indeed, or from any one else who is ready to follow the right, *wherever it may lead;* but from some of those to whom you may think fit to communicate what I have said. I believe that a great part of those who accede to Warburton's theory are influenced by the consideration, that the rejection of it implies the rejection of an established religion; and

that the Church of England, if she resign his principles, must forthwith resign all her property also, together with all right of ever holding any. This, indeed, is more than insinuated all along by Warburton himself; but Paley, who protests against the notion of an *alliance*, does not admit this consequence. I do not, indeed, entirely coincide in opinion with either of these great men; but my principles, as will be shewn in the next letter, are not at variance with the existence of a religious establishment, in a certain sense, and in a sense which admits the retainment by the Church of all her property.

But to return: Warburton, it should be observed in the first place, understood well the character of the Jewish Theocracy, as being not an *alliance* of Church and State, but an amalgamation of the two into *one* institution. He perceived, and has clearly pointed out, that the very notion of an alliance between the two communities implies the distinct character of the two, and the original and natural independency of each on the other. But he contends, that they, as two independent communities, may, and do, lawfully, form a compact for the mutual interchange of their respective rights. Now this, he must admit, holds good in such cases only where the rights which the one party (whether individual or community) resigns, are not *indefeasible* rights, and are such as the other can *lawfully exercise*. The

word "indefeasible" is frequently used by slovenly writers or speakers in a sense which does not belong to it, or without any distinct meaning at all: but to you I need scarcely remark, that an "indefeasible right" signifies one of which the party cannot *divest* himself; which is *his* to *keep*, but not his to *part with*. Such are the mutual rights, for instance, of married persons: a man cannot lawfully dispose of his wife, although she be *his*, to another person; nor renounce his claim, and abandon her. And the same rule holds good in many other instances. On the other hand, a man's right to his estate, though maintainable against all other men, is *defeasible;* that is, he is at full liberty to sell it or give it away.

Now I contend, that the rights which the Church resigns by an alliance with the civil power are indefeasible; and that those which she receives from it in exchange are such as she cannot lawfully exercise. Alliance implies mutual control: now all control of the Church in secular affairs, and of the secular power in things relating to religion, are decidedly at variance with the character of Christ's spiritual kingdom. For it should be remembered, that he not only set up no *claim* to temporal power, but he also refused steadily to accept it when *offered* to him. He withdrew from those who would have "taken him by force to make him a king." And he not only asserted no *right* to jurisdiction of a secular

nature, but he refused to be judge in an appeal which was freely brought before him. And when the Roman governor, desirous, as it should seem, to acknowledge him as a temporal prince, with a view to his own advancement, by one whose supernatural powers he must have known (for how else can we account for the anxiety of so unprincipled a man to save him?)—when Pilate, I say, eagerly pressed him with the question, "Art thou a king?" he disclaimed any other than a "kingdom not of this world;" and which consequently precluded all exercise of force by his servants in the cause of their King.

Now, can any man of candour and sound judgment really think it compatible with the notion of such a kingdom, that the supreme ecclesiastical ruler,—the governor, not merely of Christians as individual citizens, and in respect to temporalities, but of the Christian Church, *as* a spiritual community,—should be (not *accidentally* and occasionally, but) necessarily, constantly, and *ex officio*, the civil magistrate? Yet this is, as Warburton has, I think, satisfactorily proved, a necessary consequence of an alliance of Church and State. It is a case in which, as he observes, one of the two communities must resign its independence, and submit to be governed by the supreme head of the other. He does not, indeed, offer any proof that this one must necessarily be the State; nor can I perceive but that his

requisitions might be equally well complied with by making the ecclesiastical head (as at Rome) supreme over the State; by giving, for instance, the bishops the nomination of the king and of the members of parliament, as well as by giving these the nomination of bishops, and a control over their proceedings. I am considering, you will observe, which party has the better *right to claim* supremacy over the other (in which respect I think they are both equal), not which is the more likely to *obtain* it, in which there is a manifest inequality. When the earthen pot and the iron pot, in the fable, are floating side by side down the stream, it is easy to foresee which will be broken when they are driven together.

This, however, does not affect the present question; since in either case, equally, the supreme ecclesiastical ruler must necessarily be a civil ruler at the same time: and it is this that destroys the character of a kingdom not of this world. I say, "necessarily," because the *accidental* union, in the same individual, of offices pertaining to different communities, does not imply a transfer of rights from the one community to the other. That an individual Christian, whether layman or minister, should chance to be, for instance, a justice of the peace, implies no alliance or mutual interference between the two *societies*, any more than the Linnæan Society could be said to be invested with political power, if its president

and some of its other members should chance to have a seat in parliament.

That the State should impart to the Church a *coercive* power which does not naturally belong to her, and that the governors of the Church should have no authority to "administer, transact, or decree any thing without the approbation and allowance of her supreme head, the magistrate," are consequences alike deducible, according to Warburton, from the "alliance." Now there is a presumption on the very face of the matter, that Jesus Christ, to whom "all power was delivered, in heaven and in earth," would have intrusted his disciples with coercive authority, had he intended them to exercise it; and again, that he or his apostles would have intrusted ecclesiastical authority to the civil magistrates, or, at least, would have *empowered* the governors of the church to resign into secular hands the supreme control of the Church intrusted to their care, had it been his will that this should take place. We need not even look for (though I think we should find it) an express *prohibition* of such interference: the burden of proof is on the other side; the advocates for an "alliance" are bound to shew an express *permission;* since whatever authority the spiritual governors claim, must be, not as lords paramount and *owners* of the Church, but as Christ's *delegates*, responsible to him for their trust. If the king appointed any one governor of a fort, what would

he say to him if he should surrender the keys of it to another, for the sake of some supposed benefit to his master? Would he not say, that he had no *right* to do this, till he had received express permission from himself? And with respect to the grant of coercive power to the governors of the Church, it is plain that it must be exercised over persons and in cases in respect of which the State either *had a right*, itself, to exercise such power, or had it *not;* that where the magistrate *has* this right, it belongs to *him*, not to ecclesiastical officers, to exercise it; where he has *not* the right, he cannot surely confer on another what he does not himself possess. It seems evident, therefore, that consequences subversive of Christ's spiritual kingdom must follow from the "alliance" contended for: each of the contracting parties will be endowed by the other with powers of such a character, as not to be exercised by them without contravening the designs of the Church's heavenly Head; powers which will, on both sides, be placed in the most unfitting hands. St. Paul's direction to the Corinthians is, that their secular causes should be referred to the arbitration of such among the brethren as were the *least* eminent for knowledge and judgment in spiritual matters (1 Cor. vi. 4); "If ye have judgments in *things pertaining to this life*, set them to judge who are *least esteemed in the church*." Such an one, he seems to think, might very well be "a wise man"

in secular affairs, and "able to judge between his brethren." It is not necessary, indeed, that Christians should always conform literally to this direction; but it is undeniable, that a civil magistrate, and a very good one, too, *may* be, and often is, one whose studies and habits occasion him to be but a moderate theologian, and as slenderly qualified as any other, the least esteemed of the members of the Church, to give judgment in questions of doctrine or discipline. Yet the Church must, according to Warburton, submit in every thing to his supreme control, neither ordaining nor excommunicating any one (which last he allows to be a right essentially inherent in every society), nor making any regulation, nor, in short, doing any thing, but "by his permission and with his approbation." What would have been the astonishment and indignation of St. Paul, had he been informed that the elders whom he had appointed over the church at Corinth had agreed to submit all their transactions to the absolute control of the persons who had been, according to his directions, *singled out as the most unfit* for such control,—those "least esteemed in the church!"

And what, after all, are the proposed advantages to the Church, which are to compensate for the admission of this monstrous alliance? Warburton mentions three, as all that can be in any way considered as motives to induce the Church

to accept the proffered union: 1st, "Protection by the State from violence;" 2dly, The "propagation of the established religion by force;" and, 3dly, "Wealth and honours bestowed by the State on the spiritual rulers." Of these, as he justly observes, the second is *unjust*, and the third *impertinent;* for, with respect to this last, we are to consider (according to his most judicious distinction) not what may have been the *actual* motives that have influenced *churchmen*, but what is to be regarded as a *legitimate* motive for the *Church itself*, regarded as a spiritual community, having no other proposed objects than the immediate one of purity of worship, and the ultimate one of salvation of souls: to which objects, wealth and honours conferred on churchmen do not conduce. The only legitimate motive, therefore, according to him, which could influence the Church to accept the alliance, is the desire of "obtaining protection from violence;" and this, as he himself admits, the state was *already bound* in justice to afford. Now can that be a *fair and reasonable* alliance, in which one of the contracting parties surrenders to the other part of his just rights, including his independence, as the price of receiving what was already his due? Is it not more like the bargain which the profligate governor Felix thought to conclude, who "hoped that money would have been given him, to set free" an innocent man?

But some will be likely to say, in their hearts at least, "Do we not in fact receive a *quid pro quo?* Are not the rights and advantages we actually receive from the State an equivalent for what we give up? And are these temporal advantages to be resigned as a matter of indifference?" Look to the example of your Master: He had an offer made him of an *exchange* of a similar kind; and that offer and his rejection of it are, I am inclined to think, types relating to his Church, — shadowing forth both the temptations which would be placed in her way, and the resistance to them which she was bound to offer. Satan shewed him all the *kingdoms of the world*, and the glory of them, and said, "*All these are mine*, and unto whomsoever I will I give them; *all these things therefore will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" To which Jesus replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan! for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

By the Romish Church this offer has clearly been *accepted*. "Connive at and sanction all the successively arising superstitions, and all the vices of men, which are the adoration I require; and in return I will make them give you temporal honour, and wealth, and dominion: you shall be seated on the throne of the seven hills, and shall mount the many-headed beast, on condition that you administer to all nations the cup of filthiness

of fornication (that is, of departure from the true worship), which is in fact the worship of me." Such is the offer that has been made to her who calls herself the Catholic Church, and which she has embraced. It was, in truth, Satan who first proposed an alliance between the Christian Church and the State, by offering temporal advantages in exchange for giving up some of the "things that be God's," and which we ought to "render unto God," for not "serving *him only*," whom only we ought to serve. The next, I am inclined to think, who proposed to himself this scheme, and endeavoured to bring it about, was Judas Iscariot, whose design does not appear to have been the destruction of his Master, but (as West, if I recollect, has shewn) his temporal exaltation; by putting him into a situation where he would have no choice left but to submit to death, or to rescue himself by such a display of miraculous powers (of which the traitor could not be ignorant, having himself exercised them) as would induce both Jews and Romans to "take him by force, and make him a king." The former part of the alternative he never dreamed would be chosen; whence it was, probably, that he came to the knowledge of what he had been doing, and was conscience-stricken, as soon as he saw that Jesus was *condemned*, i. e. *chose* to submit. His hope had been, probably, to be both pardoned and rewarded, under the temporal dominion of the

Messiah,—the "alliance of Church and State," which he would have mainly contributed, though by presumptuous disobedience, to bring about.

The Protestant churches are indeed widely different from the Romish in the points I have been speaking of. It is their boast, that they are so; but I fear that the very circumstance of the justness, to a certain degree, of the boast, has in some points misled them; that the example of the Romish church may have done them harm, from the very circumstance (paradoxical as this may sound) that they have *not followed* it. The enormities of another's conduct may tend, though we abhor them, to lower our own standard, by making us too easily satisfied with ourselves, if we are but much *better* than they. And thus the monstrous usurpations of the Romish hierarchy, condemned and avoided as they are by the Reformed, may yet have somewhat debased their ideas respecting the purely spiritual kingdom of Heaven, and may have caused them to acquiesce in, or even entirely to overlook, smaller corruptions relative to ecclesiastical discipline,—minor departures of Christ's spouse from her devoted allegiance to him; even as the outrageous debaucheries of a Messalina may serve to keep in countenance some less scandalous adulteress. Whether the Church encroach on the State, or the State on the Church, or both; and whether this encroachment be carried to the utmost excess, or

not, the principles of Christ's kingdom are infringed alike in each case, though not in all to *the same degree*. And I scarcely need observe to you, that how seldom soever coercion may be *actually* employed, and punishment inflicted, this can make no difference as to the present question. He who has *no right* to inflict punishment, has no right to *threaten* it.

I will offer but one more observation on the system of an author with whom I regret to differ; and to the greater part of whose arguments, in this very treatise, I cordially assent, as not only unanswerable, but also strongly confirmative (for the reasons already given) of my own views on the subject.

The motives which he assigns to the civil power for seeking the alliance are, I think, as little to the purpose as those of the Church for accepting that alliance. They are, 1st, a desire of "preserving the existence and the purity of religion; 2dly, of improving its usefulness, and applying its influence in the best manner; and, 3dly, of preventing the mischiefs which in its natural independent state it might occasion to society;"—mischiefs which I will hereafter shew there is no reason whatever, under such circumstances, to apprehend.

That such motives may have *actually* influenced civil governors is highly probable; but *that*, as our author was well aware, is not the question;

he is, like myself, considering, not what is *likely* to take place, but what *ought* to take place. Now, as for the preservation of our religion in its purity, that the interference of the civil magistrate is not required for that object, any one may at once convince himself by looking at the primitive ages of the Church, and comparing them with the state of things after the empire was become Christian, and the secular authorities took a part in ecclesiastical concerns. Warburton's argument, which is somewhat subtle, turns upon this: that *truth* and political *expediency* coincide; and that, consequently, the civil magistrate will be led, with a view to his own proper object, to maintain religious truth. This may be true in every case where the rulers of the State are quite perfect, both in head and heart; and it is equally true, that whenever they are not so, — whenever they are under the influence of love of glory, covetousness of absolute power, false views of political economy, or any other human vice or error, — since their views of *expediency* will thus receive a bias, they will be exactly in the same degree favourable to a *corrupt* religion. Doctrines leading to fanatical and blood-thirsty bigotry will suit the views of one political leader (such as the chiefs of the French "League," and of the English commonwealth); those which inculcate slavish submission will be "expedient" to another: nor can there be any conceivable corruption of

religion which may not seem "useful" (that is, conducive to the object pursued,) to some civil ruler or other. In all such cases, then, secular interference will evidently do unmixed harm; and when the interference is exercised in favour of a pure religion, it will, to say the least, do more harm than good; since it will make this religion *appear* to be a state contrivance; protected, if not instituted, *for the sake* of its utility, not of its truth; and its professors will be much more liable to be regarded as *merely* professors, complying, in their outward acts, with the commands of men; not, in their hearts, with those of God.

As for the second of the advantages proposed, that of applying the influence of religion to the service of the State, the object ultimately sought after, that of really securing the permanency and furthering the prosperity of the government, will not (as I hope to shew presently) be so effectually secured as by the opposite procedure; though the immediate object, that of keeping the Church, her ministers, and her discipline, at the disposal of the civil magistrate, is, I admit, very likely to be obtained: but it is an object which I cannot characterise otherwise than as a profane degradation of our holy religion into a tool of those in power for the time being. It is Warburton's own remark, that even a *tyrant* may thus gain veneration and obedience. And he adds, shortly after, that "there are peculiar conjunctures when the

influence of religion is more than ordinarily serviceable to the State, which the magistrate cannot so well improve to the public advantage unless he have the Church under his direction, to prescribe such public exercises of religion as the exigencies of the State require." In plain English, he may prescribe "Te Deums" and fasts, whenever it suits his purposes — engage Christian ministers to preach down his political opponents — obtain acquiescence in his measures, just or unjust, on pain of damnation, — and hurl against his enemies the terrors of the next world in addition to those of the sword. Belshazzar's profanation of the sacred vessels of the Temple at an idolatrous feast was nothing to this! One would think the good bishop had forgotten on which side he was writing. If any one be convinced, by such an argument, of any thing but the *danger* to Christ's religion, by placing it thus under the control of the civil governor, I can devise no process of reasoning that is likely to undeceive him.

With regard to the last point, the mischiefs to the State likely to be occasioned by the Church in its natural independent condition, it is to be remarked, that his arguments, which certainly do appear, at first sight, to have considerable weight, will, according to his view, prove too much. They go to establish a conclusion which he strongly disclaims; viz. that it is the duty of the civil power utterly to put down by force all but

the established religion. For he dwells much on the power and influence which the ministers and leaders of a church have over it, in its independent condition, and of the danger (a danger which he apprehends on false grounds, and in the wrong place,) that they should, under that cover, "hatch and carry on designs against the peace of society." Now I have already observed, in a former letter, that the State has a natural right to punish all seditious doctrines, — all inculcation of principles avowedly inconsistent with the good order of society. But this will not satisfy him, unless all this influence of the ministers of religion be thrown into the hands of the civil power, by placing them directly under its control; and he quotes, in favour of this opinion, the words of that unhappy prince, who, in all probability, (as I will presently shew) owed to it the loss of his crown and his life: "Touching the government of the Church by bishops, the common jealousie hath been, that I am earnest and resolute to maintain it, not so much out of piety, as policy, and reason of state. Wherein so far indeed reason of state doth induce me to approve that government above any other, as I find it impossible for a prince to preserve the state in quiet, unless he hath such an influence upon churchmen, and they such a dependence on him, as may best restraine the seditious exorbitancies of ministers' tongues, who with the keys of heaven, have so far the keys of the peoples'

hearts, as they prevail much by their oratory to let in, or shut out, both peace and loyalty." Now the magistrate, by "admitting and excluding to the exercise of their function such ministers as he thinks fit," has certainly a great control over the *members of that Church which he so governs:* but what influence will this give him over *dissenters? Their* ministers will have all that independent influence over their flocks, from which he dreads such danger to the State. But why should it be expected that this influence should be exerted in hostility to the existing government? I see no reason to apprehend this, *as long as the Church is left in its original, independent condition;* but as soon as the civil magistrate identifies himself with the Church, to which dissenters are necessarily opposed, by making himself the head of their adversaries, he himself *makes* them his enemies. The alliance of Church and State, necessarily drives the enemies of the Church to be enemies of the State likewise; and thus occasions the very evil from which it professes to secure us. This is no imaginary case. Experience has shewn that the religion of the Presbyterians is not necessarily hostile to the British constitution; but the blow which it aimed at the Church of England in the reign of Charles I. necessarily *passed through the sides* of the regal power, because the regal power stood before it, as an ally. Being the *natural* enemies of the Church, they were *made*

enemies of the State, and it is possible they might not have resorted to violent means had the Church possessed no coercive power, but might have been content to employ arguments, when arguments alone were opposed to them. At any rate, they would have had no excuse for so acting; but when the Church is endued with coercive power, she loses her privilege, and must expect that coercive power will be employed against her. "Put up thy sword into its sheath; for all *they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword.*"

If, therefore, the magistrate would effectually preclude, instead of increasing, the danger in question, he must do his work thoroughly; he must not only prohibit, but completely extirpate, by a vigorous persecution, all religions except the one established. *Half-measures* generally defeat both of the objects they aim at. "Dismiss your prisoners without ransom," said the old Samnite to Pontius, the general who had captured a Roman army: "if this does not please you, kill them all: take away either their will, or their power, to hurt you:" instead of this, he made them pass under the yoke, and dismissed them ardent and implacable foes.

Some reasons against the "alliance" itself I have offered; for reasons against the measures which in sound policy are inseparable from it — penal laws against dissenters — you cannot be

better referred to any one than to its advocate, Warburton himself.

I will only add, respecting this point, that, independent of the *impolicy*, universally, of an alliance, unaccompanied with the prohibition of dissent, such alliance must also be accounted *null and void*, if a toleration, which did not exist from the first, were, by the State, *subsequently* granted. If when the king became supreme ecclesiastical governor of the Church, he, at the same time, enforced penal laws against papists and dissenters, and declared his resolution to allow of no departure from the religion he established, *that* must be understood as one of the conditions of the implied contract (and it is only an *implied* contract that is contended for); the Church must be supposed to have resigned her independency with an understanding that the civil sword should be employed (as it was) to enforce conformity. The magistrate, therefore, has no right to relax these laws (however inexpedient, and however unjust), without, at the same time, resigning his supremacy, and placing the Church in her natural independent condition: and if she *then* choose to accede to a *fresh* compact, all is fair; but otherwise, to retain what you have got by a compact, and yet plead scruples of conscience against fulfilling its conditions,—to withdraw the coercive requisition of conformity, and yet to hold the

supreme control which was submitted to on that consideration,—is to act like a profligate elector, who keeps the bribe he had received, but pleads that his tender conscience will not allow him to vote as he had engaged. Let him return the money, and then vote according to his conscience. Even Judas, when he came to a sense of his iniquity, and was anxious, if possible, to recall it, did not go empty-handed to the high priests to say, "I have sinned;" but he "*brought again the thirty pieces of silver*."

It may be said, however, by some, that though it be allowed that the alliance is not altogether justifiable, still no evils have in fact ever resulted from it that are at all comparable with those which would have been incurred had the Church met with opposition, or even with mere neglect, from the State. I much doubt the truth of this assertion, if by "evils" is to be understood, not merely temporal sufferings or privations of individuals, but evils to the Church, as a Church; such as corruption of faith, decay of piety, &c. But, be this as it may, whatever evils take place without your sanction, immediate or remote, you are at least not *responsible* for; whereas, every one *is* responsible for such as he has *helped to introduce*. If the magistrate thought fit, of his own pleasure and by his own authority, to persecute the orthodox faith, and to violate, in any way, the sanctity of the Church, he alone must bear the *blame*, fall

the *suffering* where it will. Let Christ be implored to defend and rescue, in his good time, his own inheritance, when he shall judge that his servants have been sufficiently tried. But if the Church herself *allows and empowers* the magistrate to interfere, she must be *responsible* for all the evil consequences that may follow: nay, more than that, for all that do *not* follow, if they be such as by her own act and deed she has *exposed* herself to. If the trees give the woodman a handle to his axe, they have in fact permitted the destruction not only of such as he fells, but of those also which, at his own pleasure, he has left standing. If spiritual rulers leave, for instance, the liturgy to the discretion of the civil magistrate, they not only give their sanction to all that he chooses it shall contain, but virtually to all that he *might* insert. Should he put into it the ravings of Swedenborg, I do not see on what grounds they could complain that he had exceeded the discretion with which they had entrusted him. And they are even morally responsible for *errors of judgment in him*, with regard to the affairs of the Church. If, indeed, *they* decree any thing amiss, yet, according to the *best of their judgment*, they will stand acquitted before God for their error; but not so, if any thing amiss be done by the civil magistrate, to whom they have, without permission from their Master, transferred the power with which they had been entrusted. If a

pilot to whom the conduct of a ship is committed, through mere error of judgment, steers it on a shoal, he is not morally answerable for the wreck; but if he puts the rudder into the hands of a common mariner, who, by an error in judgment, wrecks the ship, then the pilot *is* responsible; and more than this, he will have been guilty of a dereliction of duty, even though the vessel should chance to escape: according to the vulgar but expressive phrase, "it is no thanks to him." Let all endeavours be used, indeed, to make every individual member of the State a member, and a worthy member, of the Church likewise. Such an alliance, if it is to be so called, of Church and State, has no warmer advocate than myself; but whether this be brought about or no, let the two corporate bodies, even though composed of the same materials, be kept distinct and independent. Let Christ's kingdom be *in* this world; but not *of* it.

As for the evils, then, which *might* have arisen for *want* of the "alliance," in countries where it has taken place, though no one can do more than *conjecture* what they might have been, it is certain that no one would have been answerable for them, except the authors of them. That evils have *arisen from the "alliance"* (independent of its not being in itself an allowable thing), is, I think, but too evident; and also that for those, and likewise for all such as *may* arise—for *possible* as well as

actual evils — those *are* responsible who further or consent to such alliance.

Some of these evils, which are in their own nature inevitable consequences of the system, I have already hinted at. One of the chief, I hold to be the impression made on weak minds (such as those of the generality), that religion, which they see to be made a state-engine, is in fact a state contrivance;—an improvement on the Mumbo-jumbo of the negroes,—a thing devised, or kept up, merely for the sake of keeping the refractory in order; and which is not believed even by those who profess for it the most profound veneration. The appeal to the authority of wise and well-informed men who hold certain opinions, is an evidence which could not surely have been intended to be excluded in the case of the Christian religion. In astronomy there are very few capable of demonstrating the motion of the earth; but it is nevertheless believed, and not absurdly, by the mass of the people, on the ground that they know it has been proved by evidence satisfactory to the greatest astronomers. Nor are the multitude at all more capable of studying the Scriptures in their original tongues, and sifting the whole of the evidence relating to their authenticity and right interpretation: but if they know that these things have been examined by learned men, who *have been convinced* by satisfactory arguments that those books were written by such and

such persons, and that the sense of the Greek and Hebrew words is so and so, this is surely no absurd ground of conviction to the unlearned. Now the force of this appeal to authority is impaired exactly in proportion as a suspicion of hypocrisy arises: and it *will* arise, in proportion as freedom of discussion is prevented, or discountenanced, and religious profession made a point of secular obligation. A man's conformity to a religion which is "part of the law of the land," gives no assurance whatever that he is convinced of its divine origin: nay, he can hardly even be called hypocritical, even though he disbelieve it. The law requires him to say nothing against Christianity; and he obeys the law. A man whom you charged with hypocrisy for complying, in a Roman Catholic country, with all the forms of that church, though he did not believe in what she teaches, would answer, that a profession compulsory upon all alike implies nothing; and that he might as well call you hypocritical for complying with the established rule of courtesy which requires you to sign yourself his obedient humble servant. Do but observe, therefore, how constantly the "arm of flesh" weakens the spiritual cause it is called in to aid. It is like a "wall daubed with untempered mortar," built as a support to an edifice of better materials, and which, when beaten down by the "winds and floods," drags with it the rest of the structure. By the way, I

never clearly understood the right meaning of the maxim so often repeated from high authority, that "Christianity is part of the law of the land." What form of Christianity is meant? Some will say, none in particular, but *Christianity in general.* This is a most undefined law; for who can explain (I am sure I cannot) *what is* that *general* Christianity which contains nothing peculiar to any sect or church? This I know; that I might blaspheme almost any doctrine I pleased, still keeping on my side, in each case, some who call themselves Christians. I think you have a sect called Free-thinking Christians, who leave the divine mission of Jesus among their doubtful points. The Christian religion *as established by law*, is that of the Church of England. Is then a man legally punishable who impugns any of *her* doctrines?

You will observe, however, that in disallowing the interference of the civil power in religious concerns, I do not mean (as has been before observed), that the same person may not, *if it so happens*, hold office both in the Church and in the State; just as a professor at the University may be a member of parliament; though not, *as such.* Nor do I at all object to the appointment of *lay* elders to take a share in the government of the Church: for that society does not consist of *ministers* alone; nor need all its officers necessarily have the same offices. But let not the secular

magistrate have *by virtue of that, his office,* any control over the spiritual society; nor the ecclesiastical ruler, lay or clerical, have, as such, any secular power. For *then* Christ's kingdom becomes one that *is* of this world.

Thus much concerning the character of an alliance between Church and State generally. You ask me in what respects, and to what degree, this alliance can be said to exist in England. It is a question which I cannot take upon me completely to decide: and if you will consult on the subject several different well-informed members of your Church, I believe they will give you several different accounts of it.

Every one knows that the king of Great Britain, as such, is *head* of the English Church; and that he has the title of "Defender of the Faith:" whether this last be any thing more than an empty title, and what extent of jurisdiction is implied by the former, all are not agreed. In the Thirty-nine Articles, the expression "head of the Church" does not appear; but he is said to have the right of governing all "estates of men," within his dominions. Now, if by his supremacy over ecclesiastical as well as civil persons and causes, be meant merely, that he is king of all in their *capacity of citizens*, whether ministers, lay-elders, or persons unconnected with the government of the Church,—that he is empowered, and bound, to govern and protect their persons and

property, whether that be Church property, or other, *indifferently*,—if this, I say, be the whole meaning of the article, then his majesty might be as well entitled head of the *Jewish* church within the limits of these realms, and defender of *their* faith; since, as chief magistrate, he is authorized and bound, in conjunction with the rest of the legislature, to defend from violence and insult the persons and the property of Jews.

It must be owned, that the reference which the article makes to the example of the "godly princes recorded in Scripture," does seem to imply a spiritual government, such as that of the kings of Israel, who, though they could not officiate as priests, were endued with coercive power in matters pertaining to religion; which, indeed, is implied by the nature of a Theocracy, and which must be an usurpation except under a Theocracy. But some may understand by these "godly princes," such heathen kings as Cyrus and Darius, under whose auspices the Temple was rebuilt, and the sacred vessels restored. This is certainly not the most obvious interpretation; but may nevertheless be the true one. In a case of such manifest ambiguity, I cannot pretend to decide.

But it may be more to the purpose to inquire what spiritual authority the king of Great Britain actually exercises. Does he not virtually ordain bishops? And is not ordination a spiritual function? I am not speaking of the *appointment* to a

particular *see* of one who is *already* a bishop; *that* is no exercise of spiritual authority, any more than the institution to a particular benefice of one already a minister; but of the determination *who shall be* a bishop. If the patron of a benefice had power to present a layman, and to *compel the bishop to ordain* him priest, this would surely be a virtual ordination by the patron; and the case I am considering is parallel to that; unless it be said that whoever is fit to be a priest is necessarily fit to be a bishop: in which case the very notion of *ordination* would be nugatory; since you might as well talk of *ordaining* a man lecturer or prebendary. It may be said, that the chapter, a clerical body, are the electors of a bishop, and the bishops his ordainers; and I grant that this makes his ordination real and valid: but does not the *compulsion* under which this is done imply an interference of the civil magistrate in spirituals? And is not this an encroachment on the kingdom which is not of this world? If the pope had power to determine who should, and who should not, be admitted to holy orders within these realms, would not the pope be the *spiritual* governor of the churches there existing? There is something, I think, strained and fanciful in the application of the term simony to the sale of benefices, since it is not a *spiritual office*, but a temporal *endowment* that is sold. But there is something that does remind one of Simon Magus, in saying, "I will

give the Church secular power and wealth, on condition that you will let me, indirectly, if you will, but in effect, ordain bishops;—if you will let me say to whomsoever I will, not immediately indeed, but by compelling another to say it, 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office of a bishop.'"—"He offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." "Thy money perish with thee! Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter."

But it may be said, the chapter or the bishops may refuse to listen to the royal recommendation. True, and I hope they will, if ever the king should recommend an improper person: but they are *punishable for it by law.* They have no *legal* power to refuse. A Protestant in Spain may defy the pope, if he is willing to be burnt for it. Nero allowed the Christians the option of obeying him in religious matters, or of suffering punishment; because this is an option which no one can take away. And it is to be remembered, that (as has been formerly remarked) the *threat* of punishment is the same encroachment as its infliction, if its not being inflicted is merely because the threat has prevented its being incurred.

But then these bishops having a seat in the house of peers, the Church by this means acquires a share in the civil government; that is, one usurpation is compensated by another: the

control of the civil magistrate in spiritual affairs, is balanced by a control of the spiritual society in temporal; and the character of Christ's kingdom is thus doubly violated, by this additional step towards making it a kingdom of this world. "Give thy child that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my child to-morrow," 2 Kings, vi. And the complaint also of the woman who had consented to this nefarious proposal, is not foreign to the present case; "*She hath hid her child:*" for after all, to what does this boasted guardianship of the Church amount, which is to be the salve for every hurt? When you meet with any friend to the Church who is satisfied with it, do you make a corresponding proposal for securing the civil liberties of the people: "let us, to avoid the trouble and expense of elections, abolish the house of commons altogether; and by way of having the people duly represented, and their rights secured, let the government, *i. e.* the king and house of lords, *nominate twenty commoners*, to sit for life in that house, with *unequal salaries* annexed to their seats; the government filling up the vacancies occasioned by deaths, and having power to advance each of these representatives, from a lower to a higher salary." If any one raised an outcry against such an inadequate protection of the interests of the people, remind him that such, precisely, is the protection afforded to the Church, by the seats held by bishops in the

upper house. They are insignificant in number, —they have no *veto* in ecclesiastical questions,— they are appointed by the civil magistrate; and though not removable at pleasure, are *translateable* from an inferior see to a better. But what I most except against is, —the very circumstance dwelt on as an advantage,—that they have a vote in all secular matters also, in common with the rest of the peers. I scarcely need notice the petty quibble, that they sit in the house not as bishops, but as barons; since their being bishops makes them barons, it comes to the same thing. Only observe, that my objection is not to any one's admission to holy orders, or to any ecclesiastical office, who may *chance* to have a seat in either house; but to the necessary and *constant* conjunction of the two; —his sitting *as* an ecclesiastical officer; for this it is that blends and interlocks the two societies together, in the manner which some so much admire; and multiplies the bands of that alliance which is as unjustifiable in its principle as pernicious in its effects.

And pray observe this most absurd inconsistency: a clergyman *must not* sit in the house of commons, even though selected by the freemen of any place as a fit representative, and though he may chance to have *no spiritual cure*, or none which occupies much of his time (I need not remind you how this law originated): on the other hand, a bishop *must* have a seat in the upper house,

whether well or ill fitted for parliamentary business; though he cannot but have a spiritual cure, that of his diocese, which cannot but be enough to occupy fully his time and thoughts.

One of the effects resulting from this system is the imposition of articles and liturgy by secular authority. I am, as you know, a warm admirer, generally speaking, of both; but it degrades their sacred character that they should stand upon the foundation of acts of parliament; that the spiritual rulers cannot alter them when they may need it; and that the secular power can, whether they need it or not. And accordingly it is almost a proverbial reproach, that your's is "a parliamentary religion;"—that you worship the Almighty as the act directs; and that you are bound to seek for salvation, "according to the law in that case made and provided," by king, lords, and commons;—under the directions of the ministers of state—of persons who may be eminently well fitted for their civil offices, and who may, indeed, *chance* to be not only exemplary Christians, but sound divines, but who certainly are not appointed to their respective offices with any sort of view to their spiritual functions,—who cannot even pretend that any sort of qualification for the good regulation of the church is implied by their holding such stations as they do. Can this possibly be agreeable to the designs and institutions of Christ and his apostles? If any one will seri-

ously answer in the affirmative, he is beyond my powers of argumentation.

I shall not be suspected by you, I trust, of being one of those shallow reasoners who seem to think that your religion is *made* false from having been true,—your liturgy *changed* from good to bad, by the mere circumstance of having secular power to enforce them: but should any one urge that if your religion is true and your worship pure, they are so only *by accident;* being established and maintained by those, in power, not for the sake of truth (even supposing them competent judges), but of utility, *i. e.* as a convenient tool to further their political objects; and should it be added, that the ministers of state, and the others who have, in fact, the supreme direction of these matters, may, as likely as not, be persons "least esteemed in the church"—least competent (even with the best intentions) to decide questions relating to religion, of all the members of the Christian community: should all this, I say, be alleged against you, I know not what you could reply.

Even the truths of physical science may be received with disgust, and may be treated with scorn, when promulgated by authority. When Julius Cæsar had reformed the Roman calendar (after his usurpation), Cicero, we are told, when, at a party, some one remarked that the constellation Lyra would rise next day, replied, "Nempe

ex edicto;" as we should say, "by act of parliament."

The state-prayers and state-festivals, in particular, which are enjoined by civil authority, besides that they lie open to the same general objection which applies to every case of secular compulsion in religious matters, may also be especially objected to on the score of bad policy and also of bad taste. Good Christians are *loyal* persons; (I mean, conscientious supporters of *regular government*, whether under a king or president, according to the constitution of their country,) but compulsion precludes them from shewing their loyalty in that natural way which would be the most impressive to the people. It may be said of piety and loyalty, as of mercy, that "its quality is not strained." Prayers which *must* be repeated, under a temporal penalty, give no proof of either; and are degrading at once to those who utter and to those who enforce them; since it is plain that whatever these persons may in fact be, a *tyrant might* compel to the observance of such forms, and a slave would be obliged to comply. Whatever festival is observed, or form of prayer used, in compliance with the commands of the civil magistrate, it is plain that the same thing either *would* be done by an independent church, or would *not*: if it is what the Church would do of her own accord, under the direction of her own spiritual governors, would not this have a much better effect?

And if it be what the Church would in that case *not* do, can there be any good gained by obtaining a *forced* compliance? Is it not also bad taste, as well as bad policy, in a king, to *compel* men under a penalty to pray, or at least repeat prayers, in his behalf? Surely it places both parties in an unfavourable point of view, to exact *that* as matter of necessity, which would be so gladly and so heartily done without. Surely you have not such a king or such clergy, that they would not pray for him without constraint.

Add too, that many things are likely to strike one as absurd, from the mere circumstance of their being not left to the regulation of the Church *from time to time*, but "established by an ordinance for ever:" the regular appointed prayers, for instance, for the *long life* of the king, stand in strange contrast, methinks, with the setting aside for a solemn *thanksgiving*, (as you are sure, in the regular course of things, must be done,) the *day of his death; i. e.* the day on which his successor will begin to reign.

It might be suspected, not without a shew of reason, that if king William, instead of safely landing his forces on the 5th of November, had been on that day drowned in a storm, you would have been at this time solemnly celebrating that event, and repeating a form of thanksgiving to Almighty God for having a second time, as on that day, overthrown in a miraculous manner, a

wicked and treasonable attempt on the royal house of Stuart. This, I say, might have been suspected, even had the Church been in all such cases left to her own discretion; but the suspicion amounts almost to a certainty, when it is considered that all these things are dictated by those in power for the time being.

You will readily comprehend, without a detailed discussion, how strongly I disapprove of many of those other parts of the system, which tend not only to make the clergy the mere tools of the civil governor, but to degrade them even beyond what is needed with a view to the ends proposed. I allude, among others, to the regulations respecting registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials; and all the petty vexations of reading briefs, proclamations against swearing, and other things of that kind. Every thing is enforced by penalties; and many obsolete acts are still in force, which never produce any other effect than the occasional benefit of an informer, by the levying of the penalty. These last have been compared, I think, by one of your prelates, to those insects which when in all other respects lifeless still retain the power of *stinging*. If briefs and proclamations are better than sermons, or needful to be superadded, let them be read in the market-place by the town-crier, whose mode of elocution would be best suited to the eloquence of their style. I never heard one of your clergy

read a brief, (which I believe no one of them ever would read but to escape a fine,) without pitying him for the degradation of being forced to recite such trash in the house of God, and at the same time made the organ of a sort of *job*, which goes to enrich with a large proportion of what is professedly collected for the indigent Lazarus, some Dives, who fares sumptuously every day, and whom the hope of fees causes to be a zealous promoter of this kind of *charity*. "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and *bare the bag*, and kept what was put therein."

Why, again, should the laws compel your clergy to keep, in a certain manner, those registers which were designed for secular purposes? Why should the administration of a Christian sacrament be connected with the ascertainment of a man's age and parentage? unless it be purposely to secularise the clergy and the Church as far as possible. The clerk of the nearest magistrate, or the churchwardens, or any one appointed for that purpose, would be competent to do all those things, and would be more fittingly so employed. But the English government seems to have a delight and a pride in not only making the clergy do as much as possible in return for the protection they enjoy, but in enforcing their services in the most harsh and mortifying way. Like the ancient Persian soldiers, they are brought into

the field, ὑπο μαστῖγος, under the *lash* of perpetual *penalties*, which serve to keep your ministers in a state of degradation, as well as of dependence on the State, which I defy you to parallel in any other Christian Church that ever existed. They are exposed to insult and oppression from the subject as well as the secular ruler; for if any farmer have a mind to "spite the parson" for not suffering himself to be cheated, is it not notorious, that he immediately looks out for, and finds, some penalty that he may levy? And all this is owing to your boasted alliance with the State, which gives you a share, forsooth, in the civil government, about as real, as the arch of the rainbow has in supporting the skies! They will not give the Church any such power as to make her a formidable rival; only enough semblance of it to make her a party concerned in the contract;—enough to prophane and desecrate Christ's spiritual kingdom, that they may have the better plea for at once governing in her name, and injuring and affronting her. She is clad, as in mockery, in the scarlet robe, with a reed for a sceptre; and is saluted with mock veneration, and treated with indignity, as well as sentenced to the lash.

I well know, indeed, that there is no promise to Christians of exemption from temporal sufferings and indignities, and that it is their glory to bear them patiently: but this is only when they have not brought these things on themselves, by

making over to a secular governor the guidance of the Church;—by "rendering unto Cæsar the things that be God's;" otherwise, they not only deserve neither praise nor pity, but even incur just censure, on account of the evils they have helped to introduce. "If, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently, what thank have ye?"

But, with respect to the laws relating to marriages, another important consideration presents itself. Marriage consists (in our view) of two things,—a civil contract, which makes the offspring legitimate in the eye of the law, and involves temporal obligations; and a vow before God. With respect to the first, it ought to be competent to persons of all persuasions to form the civil contract without any violence to their religious principles, however erroneous, and without any interference with religious rites whatever. Oliver Cromwell was right for once, in causing this civil contract to be made before the civil magistrate. Neither Jews, nor Turks, nor Christians, can object to this, if they choose to live under the laws of this land; the magistrate, therefore, ought to certify and register the due contraction of this engagement. But as for the religious rite, that should be left to the religious community to which each person belongs. I cannot but think, that in the case, for instance, of the Unitarians, there is both a species of per-

secution and profanation committed. I need not tell you that I abhor the faith of the Unitarians; so I do that of the infidel Jews and Mahometans; but I think that none of these should be compelled, in order to contract a marriage, to be witnesses and partakers of a ceremony which their conscience condemns; and it is, under these circumstances, a degradation of the minister, and a profanation of the ceremony, that it should take place. But I would not have the priests, or whatever they may be called, of these religionists, intrusted with the solemnization of a legal contract: let that be done, *in all cases*, by the civil magistrate; and whatever religious rites each religious community thought fit to superadd, let *them* be the concern of that community. Whether the Scotch law is in this respect perfect, which does not require the interyention of a *magistrate* for the civil contract, I need not now inquire; it is manifestly much preferable to the English, in not blending together the civil contract with the religious. And the Scotch law, you will observe, does not at all preclude any religious community from passing its spiritual censure on such as do not comply with the solemn forms enjoined by that community. But many of the English clergy seem to think, with Paley, that the solemnization of a marriage by a justice of the peace, (though without *forbidding* any previous or subsequent religious ceremony,

which the conscience of the parties might dictate,) was calculated to degrade the clergy. They *stickle* for their exclusive right of solemnizing marriage between those who think the ceremony blasphemous, and who blaspheme the doctrines implied in it! One has scarcely patience with men who thus perversely glory in degradation. They remind me in many points of the dog in the fable, who mistook the clog round his neck for a badge of honourable distinction.

Altogether, indeed, I cannot but say, if I must speak out, that there is another fable respecting a dog, of which the condition of your Church strongly reminds me. Your American brethren, for instance, and some others, might say to you, as the lean and hungry wolf did to the well-fed mastiff,—"You are fat and sleek, indeed, while I am gaunt and half famished; but what means that *mark round your neck?*" You *must* do this, under a *penalty;* and you *must not* do that, under a *penalty:* you must comply with the rubric; and yet, at the same time, you must *not* comply with the rubric. You are bound by the regulations of the Church, all of which are sanctioned by law, to exclude certain descriptions of persons from the communion; yet again, you *may be prosecuted by them* if you dare to do so: you are bound to excommunicate all obstinate non-communicants, as in fact every society is, to exclude those who will not comply with its regulations;

yet you dare not do this, and indeed ought not; since the civil penalties annexed would make this a species of religious persecution. Any chapel for religious worship may be built and licensed, unless it be for the *Church of England;* this is because you are under government-protection: is not, then, the government bound (not merely to do that *something* which is so much boasted of, in the way of building churches, but) to do *every* thing that is needed, to supply the want which it forbids any one else to supply?

In short, you are fettered, and crippled, and disabled in every joint, by your alliance with a body of a different character, which *could* not, even with the best intentions, fail to weaken instead of aiding you; but which, in fact, aims chiefly at making a tool of you. But some of you seem so habituated to this dependence of the Church on the State, and so fond of it, as to have even *solicited* interference in a case which could not concern the civil community, and which the secular magistrate was likely to care about as little as Gallio. An English bishop did not dare to ordain an American to officiate in a country not under British dominion, without asking and obtaining permission of his government; which had just as much to do with the business as the government of Abyssinia!

Think not that I mean to hold up your Church to the exulting scorn and censure of sectaries, as

if it must necessarily cease to be a Church because these abuses exist; I think your Church ought not to be under secular control; and that its spiritual rulers are to blame for submitting without remonstrance to such control: but since they choose thus voluntarily to submit, all that they do is their own act and deed: the spiritual power that they have and exercise is derived from Christ and his apostles; and, therefore, wherever there is no direct contravention of the Divine commands, their acts are valid, even where their motives are censurable; *fieri non debuit; factum valet.* If a king of Great Britain, for instance, should be induced, by improper motives, to appoint some particular person a lord lieutenant or justice of the peace, he would himself, indeed, be blamable for so doing; but the appointment would, nevertheless, be legal and valid.

And, as for any ordinance or practice of your Church which may be itself tinged with error, if such error should be accounted necessarily sufficient to *unchurch* you, it is plain, that none but a church which assumed to be infallible could pretend to call itself a Christian church at all.

But for all the abuses which may exist in your Church, the Dissenters (besides their own peculiar faults) are at least as responsible as any of yourselves; since, as soon as they perceived any thing to object to, instead of remonstrating and trying to effect a reform, they at once withdrew

as if glad of any pretence to effect a schism! They, in fact, proceeded at once to an *excommunication* of you; and, therefore, even supposing that they could have justly charged you with heresy, they would have acted in direct contravention of St. Paul's directions, in "rejecting you without a *first and second admonition.*" If I perceived that the government of my country was submitting to an undue control of a foreign power, I would at least endeavour, long and earnestly, to induce the members of the administration to assert their independence. Small would be the patriotism of that man who should, in such a case, immediately renounce his allegiance—abjure his country—and raise the standard of rebellion.

Still less do I coincide with them in condemning a religious establishment altogether, or in charging your clergy (a charge which, unfortunately, is sanctioned by Warburton and others) with being the hired servants of the State,—kept in pay by the government. This assertion, though maintained in common by the enemies and by some of the friends of your Church, you are justified in distinctly denying, and may satisfactorily prove to be totally unfounded.

My views of this subject, however, I will lay before you in my next letter.

LETTER V.

ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS AND TOLERATION.

MY DEAR ———

You well know what admiration I feel for the excellent constitution of civil government under which you live. I do not think it faultless, which no human institution is, nor that it has no such faults as it would be possible to mend; but, even without any "revision and correction" in successive editions of it, such are its advantages, as strongly to impress the mind of every one who is well acquainted with it, except some of those who live under it, and in whom "familiarity has bred contempt" for the blessings they have always been accustomed to enjoy. I should therefore, of course, be backward to advise the removal of any support that really tends to give stability to so excellent a form of government; though still even that would be an imperious duty on any servant of Christ who might be convinced that it was impossible otherwise to comply with his commands. This, however, is so far from being the case, that the kind of alliance which I so much

deprecate, I can distinctly prove to be disadvantageous to the State as well as to the Church; and, consequently, that an alteration of the system would be beneficial to both parties.

Again, I consider it as so important a thing that the clergy should not be dependent on the bounty of their flocks, which could not but give an undue advantage to such preachers as would be more studious to conform their doctrines to the inclinations of their hearers, than the character of their hearers to the doctrines of the Gospel, that I would not willingly suggest the adoption of a system under which, as Paley rightly observes, "preaching would become a kind of begging." And yet, if it were impossible otherwise to preserve inviolate the fundamental principles of Christ's spiritual kingdom, I would prefer the other as the less evil of the two. I would hardly hope, indeed, that the State would be persuaded voluntarily to relinquish a powerful support; nor that the clergy would be induced, generally, even by the most decisive arguments, to believe that they were called upon to resign their revenues: but still I would consider myself bound to clear my own conscience, by following the truth wherever it might lead me, though without expectation of finding many companions.

But, in fact, none of these consequences would follow from any thing I would propose. The clergy, though they ought not to be the hired

servants of the civil magistrate, may justly retain their revenues; and the State, though it has no right of interference in spiritual concerns, not only is justly entitled to support from the ministers of religion, and from all other Christians, but would, under the system I am recommending, obtain it much more effectually.

If, indeed, I really thought the spiritual governors of the Church in yours, or in any other country, had absolutely betrayed, for a pecuniary consideration, the trust solemnly committed to them, and were receiving from the magistrate a compensation in the shape of wages, for their surrender of the independence and purity of Christ's kingdom, I should have nothing to advise them, but forthwith to "cast down the thirty pieces of silver" — the covenanted price of their treachery.

But the fact, in the case of the Church of England at least, is far otherwise. Both Warburton, indeed, and Paley, speak of the maintenance *provided for the Clergy by the State*, of the justness of a *compulsory payment* for their support, of a tax levied expressly for that object, and of the best modes of raising such a tax, and of distributing the produce of it, &c., as if all such discussions necessarily appertained to the subject now before us; but, in truth, they are irrelevant, and may be waved altogether. It is, to say the least, a gross misrepresentation, to affirm that government levies a *tax* in the shape of tithes, and pays the

clergy with the proceeds. It is a mere play upon words, to call tithes and other church revenues a *tax*, or to speak of any one *paying* them. They are neither a tax, nor a payment, in the sense of the words which these writers have in view. A man who has an estate left to him, burdened with certain legacies, may be said, in one sense, to *pay* them, since the money passes through his hands, and the legatees look to him for it; but he does *not* pay in the same sense in which he *pays his labourers their wages*, because the legacy money *is not, nor ever was, his*. And in one sense you may, if you will, call these legacies a tax levied by the government, inasmuch as the laws of the land enforce the payment of it; but in a very different sense from that in which any other tax is so called; viz. a portion withdrawn, at the command of the State, for the public exigencies, from that which was before the private property of the individual. It is easy to see to which description the chief part of the Church revenues belongs. Those who occupy glebe-lands pay the clergy exactly in the same sense of the word, and in the same manner, as the occupiers of any other land pay their landlords, whether bodies corporate, such as hospitals and colleges, or individuals. Nor is the case of tithes any thing materially distinct from that of other property. Some are held by laymen, some by incumbents of livings, some by bodies corporate; but in all cases, he who is

called the owner of the land has manifestly no more claim to the nine-tenths of the produce, than the tithe-holder has to his one-tenth. It is most unreasonable, therefore, that the tithe-payer should complain of being obliged to surrender what *never belonged* to him; even the *desire* to retain it, is as manifest a breach of the tenth commandment, as to covet an adjoining farm.

How the Church of England came into possession of that property which her officers now hold, is an inquiry which may serve to amuse you and others who delight in antiquarian researches; but it is not relevant to the present question. The actual right of the Church to her property is founded (like that of individuals to theirs) in *possession*. There are many landholders whose titles would not bear looking into, if they were made to rest on a justification of every step by which they had been originally acquired and subsequently transmitted. The right of the Church must at least be allowed to stand on the same footing with that of colleges, hospitals, town-corporations, &c. to their respective possessions. Nay, there are several other *religious* communities which, virtually, enjoy similar advantages, though their wealth be not so great. There have been persons of various religious persuasions, both Christians and Jews, who have given or bequeathed property, for the use, directly or indirectly, of their respective societies. Then are

Methodist chapels, colleges for the education of Independents, Anabaptists, and others, and several like endowments, which enjoy, in common with every other species of property, the protection of the State. So that if this is to be held to constitute an *established* religion, you have *more* religions *established* than most persons are aware of. What I mean is, that, let the revenues of hospitals, schools, &c. and of the Church of England, have originated how they may, none of them can be properly called a portion of the revenues of the State, raised by taxes on the subject's property, and appropriated by the existing government (as in the case of the army and navy,) to the payment of certain persons in the service of that government.

I freely acknowledge, however, that the State has a right to take away the property of all, or any, of these corporations, (indemnifying, of course, the individuals actually enjoying the revenues,) whenever the manifest inutility or hurtfulness of the institutions renders their abolition important to the public welfare. For if we do not allow this right, — if we consider wills so sacred, that no endowment is to be on any account transferred from the purpose originally designed to another, we are in fact making the earth the property, not of the living, but of the dead; we authorise one generation to appropriate for ever, to purposes which may chance to be in-

significant or pernicious, any part, or even the whole, of the territory of the country; to the entire exclusion of their successors. It is a well-known maxim, accordingly, of English jurisprudence, and one founded in justice, (though unfortunately not extended to Scotland,) that "the law abhors perpetuities:" such appropriations being in certain instances tolerated, with an understanding that no endowment shall claim to be permitted to continue, which is either a manifest waste of money on an object entirely useless, or which plainly interferes with the public good. At the same time it should be most steadily kept in mind, that the right to disendow is one which should not be exercised but on the most mature deliberation, and with the most trembling caution; and that the burden of proof should always be considered as resting on those who propose alienation of property. For unless such proposals be looked upon with a jealous eye, the temptation is so great, that the most hasty and indiscriminate spoliations might be expected to ensue. And this, not only when some Henry the Eighth arose, who shamelessly pillaged for his own immediate profit, whenever he could find or make a shadow of a plea; but also under the government of men much more scrupulous than he; but who yet might be [illegible] lighted with the thought of setting up new [illegible] tutions of their own devising; and of pro[illegible] ample funds, by the abolition of old ones, [illegible]

to rear an edifice to their own fame, and ready to pull down any other building to supply materials. Add to which, that the *patronage* which would thus be thrown into the hands of those in power for the time being, would present, to many minds, a temptation even more alluring than that of private emolument.

I think, therefore, that although when any *fresh* appropriation of part of the national wealth is proposed, proof may fairly be demanded that the designed application of it would be the *most* beneficial to the public that could be devised; in the case of existing institutions, on the contrary, this ought not, generally at least, to be insisted on; but that if the funds appear to be neither *uselessly* nor *hurtfully* employed, this should be (except in some very extraordinary cases) held a sufficient reason for letting things remain as they are; without rigorously requiring it to be shewn, that the funds could not possibly be *better* bestowed. For to require this, though in theory it sounds plausible, would in practice, as long as rulers are fallible men, and liable to passion and prejudice, lead speedily to the dissipation of all endowments. On one pretence or another, they would be diverted by successive administrations from this purpose to that, till they became a mere perquisite to those in power. And no one would ever give or bequeath any property to any such institutions as I am speaking of, when he knew that there was

no chance of having his designs fulfilled, unless they should seem not only beneficial, but the *most* beneficial, not to *one* only, but to every *successive* administration; and, what is more, should be *acknowledged* as such, by those whose private interest or ambition would lead them to advocate some scheme of their own. The principles accordingly which have been laid down, are what the British government has, in its general practice, adhered to. It has preserved inviolate the property of hospitals, colleges, &c. whenever the institutions appeared to be not detrimental, and, on the whole, useful; without thinking it necessary to inquire, in each case, whether the funds could possibly have been *more* usefully employed; as that practice must ultimately make an opening for unlimited spoliation. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for instance,—of Edinburgh and Aberdeen,—and of each of the several colleges, can hardly be, every one of them, on the best conceivable plan; since they differ so much from one another: the Hulsean lectureship, and the Bampton lectureship, cannot be each of them a model of perfection in its rules: much less can Methodist chapels, and Baptist chapels,—academies for the education of men in the principles of various descriptions of sectaries,—and others for the inculcation of the principles of the Church of England,—be, all, and each of them, considered as the best possible appropriation of money? but

it is conceivable, that each may be, on the whole, rather advantageous than hurtful to the community; and on that ground I presume it is that the legislature, very wisely, extends its protection to all, and places corporations, in such cases, on the same footing, in respect of their property, with private individuals. There seems no reason, therefore, why the property of the Church of England, which cannot be said to be a part of the public revenue of the State, in any sense except that in which the property of any college or hospital might be so designated, should not be protected in the same manner, and on the same conditions, as the property of any other body-corporate, whatever.

Now though the civil magistrate is the supreme secular governor of every subject, including, for instance, the members of the universities, yet he is content (as he ought to be) with the *civil* control of them, and the regulation of such matters as immediately concern the State. The king and parliament do not pretend to dictate the practice, and sanction the prescriptions, in hospitals,—nor to make statutes for the universities,—nor to prescribe the course of lectures to be delivered by professors; but leave medical and academical men to settle matters which fall within their own respective provinces. Would it not be preposterous for the State to claim the universities

as *allies*, and on that ground to draw up, and impose by its own authority, a set of mathematical or anatomical articles; or to interfere with the courses of lectures delivered? And is there any thing inconsistent in the protection afforded to the property of such bodies, without the exercise of any such interference?

Warburton's position, therefore, that the provision of a legal maintenance for the clergy is necessarily connected with such an alliance of Church and State as he advocates, and "must begin and end with it," is utterly untenable; as being either founded on a manifestly false assumption, if you understand him in one sense, or, if, in another sense, irrelevant and foreign from the question. If he means by the "provision of a legal maintenance," the payment of the clergy out of the taxes levied by the State, as the army and navy are paid,—his inference may be true, but is nothing to the purpose; since the clergy are *not* so paid: if he means by this "provision," merely the legal *protection of Church property*,—the non-alienation of those revenues of which she is in actual possession,—then, it is utterly false that this requires, or implies, or is in any way necessarily connected with, any interference of the civil magistrate in affairs that are not of a secular character,—with any alliance between the two communities; as is evident from the

of those other institutions above alluded to, with which no such interference is found to be necessary, or judged to be reasonable.

And as such a possession of property by a Church does not necessarily require, and consequently does not authorise, any spiritual supremacy or jurisdiction in the civil magistrate, so neither is it at all incompatible with the character of Christ's kingdom. A religious establishment, in this sense, even accompanied by lay-patronage, is by no means subversive of the designs of our Saviour and his apostles; but on the contrary, highly conducive to them. For supposing Christianity first introduced into some country where it was gladly received, the civil governors of which should have determined to stand aloof, in their public capacity, and to leave things to take their own course; in such a state of things, laymen might, and in many instances probably would, provide not only for the present, but also for the permanent maintenance of religious ministers, by building and endowing places of worship, and houses for the residence of teachers, each man in his own neighbourhood; leaving the Church whose doctrines he embraced, to *ordain* ministers, and reserving to himself, and his heirs, merely the right of *selecting from among these* any minister he might most approve. This patronage would be [illegible]more an encroachment on the spiritual rights of the Church of Christ, than the *patronage* (for

virtually it is such, as far as the present question is concerned,) which any one exercises, who contributes, in like manner, a smaller sum of money towards the maintenance of any religious teacher whose ministry he approves; — who relieves the wants, for instance, as the Philippians and others did, of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. And to such maintenance St. Paul teaches us that Christian ministers are fairly entitled. But he no where teaches that the ministers are always to be maintained solely by the voluntary contributions of their *flocks for the time* being. If, for instance, a sum raised for the relief of the immediate wants of St. Paul had proved more than adequate for that purpose, and he had thought it advisable, with the consent, or at the desire of the contributors, to purchase, with the overplus, a small piece of ground, (supposing the civil government had been willing to extend legal protection to such property,) on the revenue of which he might himself subsist during his life, and which afterwards might be appropriated to the support of any regularly ordained elder whom the church at Philippi might prefer,—this could have been no more an infringement of Christ's kingdom, than his employment of the money for his own immediate wants. And if such a piece of land had been let or sold, burdened with a rent-charge, to some farmer, who was required to pay over a certain portion of the produce to such elder, it would have

been most unreasonable for him to complain that he was contributing by *compulsion*, and not as a *free gift*; since, in truth, he would not have been paying any thing that ever was *his*, nor, consequently, any thing that he could have a *right* to bestow as a *gift*.

Now nothing more than this is *necessarily implied* by a religious establishment, with lay patronage. And such an establishment is virtually enjoyed in Britain by many sectaries, who hold (in the name of trustees) academies, meeting-houses, and other endowments, bestowed by persons of those persuasions.

It may be objected, however, that if the Church asserts her independence, denies the spiritual supremacy of the magistrate, and renounces the alliance now subsisting with the State, she cannot claim to retain that property, the possession of which was, if not granted, at least guaranteed to her, at a time when that alliance existed, and that supremacy was admitted; since the continuance of these, it may be urged, must be regarded as the understood conditions of the contract by virtue of which she holds her revenues. In short, she may be represented as in the condition of the mouse in Horace's fable, which was obliged to submit to starvation in order to creep through the chink by which alone it could regain liberty:

Macra cavum repetes arctum quem macra subisti.

And I trust your clergy would be ready to exclaim with the poet,

Hac ego si compellar imagine, *cuncta resigno.*

But I will shew, I trust, most satisfactorily, that the objection does not apply; and this, for three reasons, any one of which might alone be considered a sufficient reply. First, the magistrate's supremacy ought not to be regarded as having been admitted on the condition of protection of property, but on another condition, which is *not fulfilled;* so that his claim to that supremacy is, in truth, nullified by a failure on his side. 2dly, Even were this not so, the Church ought, in *equity*, to be allowed to retain her property on the same terms with universities, hospitals, and other such public bodies, without being subjected (even with her own original consent) to any harder conditions than the rest. Lastly, and above all, independent of the foregoing considerations, the State is not justified, either in prudence or in equity, in insisting on the claim of spiritual supremacy as a *benefit* to the civil government, because she would not only be NO LOSER, BUT A VERY GREAT GAINER by relinquishing it.

With respect to the first point, I have already shewn, in my last letter, that the supremacy of the civil magistrate was admitted on the understood condition that he should *prohibit* and *punish all deviations from the established religion.* Now

less this compulsory system is both unjust and impolitic; so also is the subjection of the Church to the State: but the question is not concerning the *propriety* of the stipulations, but concerning the fact of their existence. Now, not only is it evident that this exercise of coercive power against dissent did exist when the "supremacy" was first allowed, and very long after, but I think no candid inquirer can doubt that, in the minds of all parties, these two things were considered as the *equivalents* for each other, and *corresponding* conditions. It is plain, even from the nature of the case abstractedly, that the fair equivalent for *mere protection of property*, is the employment of that property harmlessly, and, on the whole, beneficially; and that the equivalent for giving the civil governor spiritual control over the Church, and supremacy in religious affairs, is, that he on his part should allow of no other religion, but should henceforth consider an offence against the Church as an offence against the State. And that this was in fact the understanding of all parties, seems evident, not only from the existence of penal laws against Dissenters, and from the general tone in which King James declared that he "would admit of no departure from the articles, or the liturgy, in any degree," but also from one of the articles themselves; that which, while it asserts the king's supremacy, explains the term as signifying his "authority to restrain, by the

civil sword, the stubborn and evil-doers:" now, since no one could ever have disputed his authority to punish *civil* offences, this explanation would be nugatory and impertinent, if, under the term "evil-doers," schismatics and other *religious* offenders were not meant to be included. Not to mention that his authority is at the same time declared to be the same as that of "*all* godly princes mentioned in Scripture," of whom the far greater part — the kings of Israel — were, we know, authorised to punish offences of this description.

It is manifest, therefore, that the coercive enforcement of conformity is the natural, and was the understood equivalent for the control exercised by the secular power over the Church; and that all claim to the latter is rendered null by the discontinuance of the former.

But even were this not the case, — were the condition on the one side to be considered binding, when the corresponding condition on the other is not fulfilled, — still it would be, as I have said, a hard and iniquitous condition, that the Church should not be allowed to retain her property on the same terms with other bodies corporate, nor to enjoy, in common with them, the protection of her rights, without paying a price for it which is exacted from none of them.

With respect to the last point, I have already shewn, in a former letter, that the supposed in-

vantage to the State, derived from the subjection of the Church, is altogether unreal; and that the very object proposed might be even much more effectually obtained without it. Consequently, that cannot reasonably be claimed and insisted on as a *benefit*, which is in reality a *detriment*.

Let any one point out (which it would be difficult for any to do better than Warburton has) what advantages to the State are to be expected from its control over the Church, and he will plainly see that there is no one of them—no legitimate one at least—which would not even be better secured by the emancipation of the Church. As for the preservation of Christ's religion in its purity, I have already remarked that that object will be the better attained the less the civil magistrate interferes in religious concerns: there is no reason why he should be the best judge in such matters; and if he were, the temporal power, which is the instrument he works with, is the one most unfit to be employed in such a case; and it is, indeed, clearly unjustifiable in the government of a kingdom not of this world. The other proposed advantages are, that the influence of religion may be turned to the service of the State; and that the evils which might accrue from the Church in its natural independent condition, may be avoided.

Now, let any statesman but reflect how earnestly and repeatedly Christians are enjoined to

submit, for conscience sake, to every ordinance of man, and to pray for even *pagan* rulers; and then let him consider, whether a civil governor is not casting discredit either on himself or on the religion whose support he seeks, in proclaiming his distrust of the readiness of Christian ministers to teach those lessons of obedience to the existing government, which any but the most detestable tyrant might naturally expect from them;—in employing those compulsory means of securing their allegiance, which such a tyrant *might* employ just as easily as a good prince, and which none but a tyrant *need* resort to. Why should the ministers of the Gospel, even supposing them ill-embued with the spirit of the Gospel, preach rebellion? Men who possess *property*, have a stake in the country; and are therefore, from mere interested motives, seldom the advocates of revolution, which, they must know, generally leads to a wreck of property. And it should be remembered, also, that that which the clergy possess is, great part of it, disposed of by State patronage. Would not the inculcation of the duty of submission to the laws, and quiet behaviour, come with a better grace (as well as prayers for the king and parliament) from the mouths of men who, though still subjects, and still, more or less, interested in the stability of the government, were yet left to themselves in respect of religious concerns, and acknowledged no supremacy of the civil magistrate,

except in civil matters, and in as far as they were, individually, subjects of the State? They might still be suspected indeed, in many instances, of hunting for preferment. So they are now; sometimes with reason, and sometimes without. But whatever change did take place would be *for the better*, in respect of their influence with the people. The unfavourable suspicions against them would be mitigated at least, if not removed. They could not, at least, be accused of teaching a parliamentary religion;—of having articles and liturgy imposed on them by secular authority;—of being ordained by bishops, themselves ordained by command of the civil power;—in short, of being in no degree free-agents. Their influence, therefore, would be increased; and that increased influence would be as much directed as now towards the support of legitimate government. But the error which statesmen have committed consists in this; that they estimated highly, and justly, the importance of religious influence in making men good subjects, and eagerly coveted to secure the advantage of such influence in their own favour, without considering that it rests on *opinion;* and that, consequently, the means they adopted to obtain it materially diminished its weight. The Church, when made a subject-ally of the State, *cannot* give it the same support as when independent; because it is her independence that gives her *dignity*, and procures for her

veneration; and it is on these that her power over men's minds must depend.

But there is another error, which has helped to strengthen the former, and has contributed with it to lead to the same result. The statesman looks to the Dissenters, and observing the disaffection of many of them, exclaims, "See what the church would be, if left in her original independent condition! See what an organ of sedition the pulpit may be made, and is made, when not under the control of the civil power!" This fallacy, gross as it is, seems to have misled the great Warburton. But can any reasoning be more fallacious than to infer a natural and necessary tendency in the Christian religion to produce disaffection, from the hostility shewn by sectaries to a government which *arrays itself* on the side of their opponents? and to conclude that if the magistrate would leave all denominations of Christians entirely to themselves, he would experience from all, or from any of them, that unfriendly feeling which he *provokes* in one party, by placing himself at the head of another? Dissenters, it is true, are *tolerated;* and doubtless would, of the two, choose rather to be tolerated than persecuted; but they are indignant at the very name of "toleration." Being naturally and necessarily opposed to the Church of England, they feel that they must be objects of jealousy to him who is the head of that Church; and the[illegible]

consequently, a corresponding jealousy towards him. It is not because he is supposed to be, as an *individual,* of a different persuasion from them; but that as a *magistrate* he is, *ex officio,* the ecclesiastical governor of their opponents. He is made a part of the system to which they are adverse; and their religious principles are thus called into play in hostility to the government. And thus it is that the liability of the pulpit to become the organ of sedition is produced; because the preacher who assails your faith feels that he is virtually opposing the "defender of that faith:" in attacking the Church, he cannot but be conscious that he is in some sense encountering its supreme governor. One who can attribute the hostility thus generated, not to the circumstances which so plainly tend to produce it, but to the genius of the Christian religion itself, when left uncontrolled, and who can persuade himself, that the same would have been the case had the State never identified itself with the Church, nor interfered in its concerns,—must be beyond the reach of instruction even from experience: otherwise I might appeal to the example, alluded to in a former letter, of the Presbyterians of Great Britain, who have always been hostile or friendly to the government, according as it was, or was not, identified with the Church which they opposed: or to the case of the United States; to the government of which all varieties of sects are alike well-

affected, because it does not make itself the head of any one of them, nor interfere at all in spiritual concerns; but is content to exercise civil control over every individual, of whatever persuasion.

Now I have adverted to the case of the Americans, I will remark, by the way, that though I would not pretend to hold them up as a model to others in what regards religion, yet I do think they are perfectly right in considering the government itself as of no religion at all. This very determination has, I know, occasioned an outcry against them, from some who do not understand "what manner of spirit they are of;" as if it implied that they were a nation of atheists. But it does not at all follow, that because the State, *as a body*, is of no religion, therefore the individuals who compose it, whether governors or subjects, are of no religion. For, in truth, the State (as Warburton has well remarked) is *not properly a subject of religion*. The Jewish nation was indeed constituted such by express divine appointment; public worship and sacrifice, by and on behalf of the State, was ordained; and *national* blessings or calamities were among the chief sanctions of the Mosaic law. But with Christianity the case is far otherwise. It was designed for individual believers, as individuals, and as united in a spiritual community, the Church; political bodies it does not recognise. They may be composed of the very same individuals; but they cannot be

as political bodies, subjects of the Christian religion. Of that religion the object is, the salvation of souls; and it forbids all temporal means of coercion: the magistrate is authorised, and bound, to employ coercion in his own proper province; which is, not the salvation of souls, but the preservation of peace and temporal prosperity. He may be a very zealous Christian, and will doubtless be the better magistrate for being such; but his zeal would be, to say the least, "a zeal not according to knowledge," if he infringed the principles of the Gospel, by endeavouring to make Christ's an earthly kingdom, and employing temporal power in *his* cause.

The censure so hastily passed on the American government, might just as well be applied to any *agricultural* society; none of which, that I ever heard of, is of any religion, as a body, though all its members may be good Christians. But because Christianity is *useful* to the State, as it certainly is, shallow reasoners are thus led to forget that the State itself is not a subject of that religion, nor can lawfully interfere in its concerns; and that while Christ, in "making himself a king, speaketh" nothing "against Cæsar," he requires us to "render unto Cæsar and unto God" the things that belong to each. The only way in which the members of the government can allowfully give effect, in their public *capacity*, to the conviction they may feel of the usefulness of any re-

ligion, is by securing (or, if they think fit, increasing) the *endowments* appropriated to it; and by defending its professors (in common, however, with those of any other religion,) from mob-persecution, insult, and libel.

The conclusion, then, which both reason and experience must dictate to any man of candour and sense, is, that if all subjection of the Church to the State were at an end, except the subjection of each individual Christian, in his capacity of *citizen*, to the civil government, — if the secular power renounced all supremacy and all interference in religious concerns, and merely secured, to all descriptions of persons, the property they now possess, so long as it should appear to be on the whole not mischievously nor uselessly employed, — that if this, I say, were done, the *loyalty* of the ministers of the Church of England would remain undiminished, — their influence, and *power to inculcate* such principles on the people, would be much increased, — and the disloyalty which may exist in any sects of *Dissenters* would be diminished, and would gradually die away. The State, consequently, would be NO LOSER, BUT A VERY GREAT GAINER, in respect of the objects proposed by the now subsisting alliance, were the terms of that alliance completely changed, and all claim of supremacy dropped.

I have also shewn, that even if that [illegible] political benefit which has just been proved to be

detrimental to the government, it still would not be equitable to require and insist on from the Church harder terms than those required from other bodies, as the condition of enjoying mere security of property, even were such conditions part of the original compact: but this, also, I have shewn is not the case; since the supremacy of the civil power must be considered as having been the understood equivalent for the employment of coercion to enforce conformity; a condition which is no longer fulfilled.

The connexion, then, such as it now subsists, between the State and the Church, which some, both statesmen and churchmen, from confused or partial and imperfect views of the subject, are so anxious to maintain, is not only in principle unjustifiable, but is, in every point, inexpedient for both parties; each of whom would obtain the very objects proposed (and others besides) much more easily and effectually if the system were altered. And the advantage of a fixed and established maintenance for the clergy (certainly a most important one) is in no respect dependent on, or necessarily connected with, that unscriptural and absurd amalgamation of spiritual things with temporal, which I have been deprecating. The State derives far less efficient support from those within the Church, and incurs far greater danger from those without, than if its interference with religion were at an end: and the Church, on

the other hand, is crippled and paralysed in all its movements by the unfitting and injurious aid which is afforded by the secular power. Were expediency, — real expediency, — made a plea for profaning Christ's spiritual kingdom, it ought not to be admitted: but in this case, right views even of expediency alone, dictate an opposite course: so that the error is no longer excusable.

A few words, before I conclude, on the subject of *toleration*. I have said that the Dissenters are indignant at the name of "toleration;" and I cannot but think it would be better laid aside. It would never, I think, have been employed, in reference to the procedure of *any community*, had any distinct meaning been attached to the word. Toleration implies two things; *disapprobation*, and abstinence from the *infliction* of *any punishment*, or exercise of any act of hostility. It is therefore a branch of Christian charity, to be practised by individuals. *They* ought to make allowance for the *faults* or errors of their neighbours, — to practise mildness, gentleness, forbearance, towards such as in their own *conscience* they believe to be *wrong*; to abstain from severity of censure and unkind treatment towards those whose doctrine or practice their own private *judgment* condemns. To speak then of any *community* being tolerant, in this the obvious and proper sense of the word, is unmeaning. A community, for instance a church, or a state, is no really existent person; but is

considered as such only in respect of its institutions and public acts. Independent of these, it has no *conscience*,—no *judgment*,—no *approbation or disapprobation*,—no *opinion* or belief. When a state is said to "judge" such and such a kind of conduct or principle to be faulty, this or that act to be an offence, the meaning is, that it has *laws* against them, denouncing penalties, either positive or negative;—either fine, imprisonment, &c., or privations and disabilities. For the State never speaks but in its laws; and the law never speaks but to command or forbid, and that under a penalty. Now the State, or any other community, cannot be said to tolerate that against which it has a law; and any thing against which it has *no* law, it cannot be said to *disapprove*, whatever may be the *private* opinion of the individuals who administer its affairs. The two points, then, which go to make up the idea of toleration (viz. *disapprobation*, and abstinence from *punishment*), in the case of a community, can never be combined: whatever, as a *body*, it disapproves, it prohibits and punishes; whatever it permits, it does not, as a body, disapprove. If non-conformity be, in the eye of the State, an *offence*, it ought to be *punished;* if *no* punishment is denounced against it by the State, that is the same thing as to declare that, in the eye of the law, it is *no* offence. In like manner, if the Church condemn any doctrine or prac-

tice, it must of course *prohibit* it, under an ecclesiastical penalty: whatever it does not prohibit, is no *heresy or offence in the eye of the Church;* whatever may be the private opinion of this or that individual member. For instance, "whether angels are employed in ministering to Christians on earth or not," is a question on which only one opinion can be true; but if neither is made an *article of faith*, neither is condemned by the Church, as a community, nor can therefore be a matter of toleration. And as the State has no right to consider *any* religious opinion as a crime, in itself, it has nothing whatever to do with religious toleration.

It is true, that a community may err by multiplying enactments unnecessarily, respecting *unimportant* matters; or by visiting light offences with heavy penalties; or it may keep clear of this error: and in this sense, it may be said to be of an "intolerant" spirit, or the contrary. But this is a misuse of terms, which serves no purpose but to confuse men's notions. It would be, for instance, an impertinent innovation in language, to say, that various modes of dress are tolerated by the government of Great Britain; meaning that, while, at one time, in Russia, a particular fashion was prescribed by the emperor, to which all were compelled to conform, in England, on the contrary, every one is free to dress as he pleases; &c.

to speak of the *tolerance* of your laws with respect to petty larceny; because that offence is not punished so severely as burglary.

Dissenters, then, might complain of want of toleration, in a certain sense, by the Church of England (though it would be more properly called needless scrupulosity,) if she excluded them from her communion on account of trifling points of doctrine or discipline. In truth, *that* is precisely the complaint which she may fairly make against *them;* most of them having, in the first instance, withdrawn from her communion, *of their own accord*, on the most frivolous grounds; and without even waiting to complain or remonstrate. But to speak of their toleration by the State is intrinsically absurd; it implies that the same thing is at once a political offence, and no political offence.

It is not, however, a mere inaccuracy of language that I am objecting to: the word *toleration*, by carrying with it a notion of *censure* and disapprobation, tends unnecessarily to exasperate the feelings of Dissenters; and, together with the civil magistrate's supremacy in the Church of England, contributes to make them feel themselves a proscribed party, who owe the government no kindly feeling. It is, in short, of a piece with the folly of the Samnite general, who made his prisoners pass *under the yoke*, and then dismissed them, irritated, but not disabled.

You suggested to me, I remember, that if the

Church of England were no longer recognized as a part of the political constitution of the State, the sectaries might come forward to assert a claim to a share of her revenues; urging that the ministers of one persuasion have as good a right to tithes as another, when no one is *the religion of the State*. Very likely they might do this; they can hardly be more jealous of the property of your Church than they are already. But there are only two points to be considered: whether there would be any *justice* in their claim; and whether they would have *power* to carry it into effect. I think neither. If the revenues of the Church were, what they are not, a *payment by the State*, out of the public revenues, it would be most unreasonable to demand that the State should withdraw part of that payment from those who now receive it, on *the ground that they would no longer recognize the supremacy of the civil power*, and bestow it on others who *equally refuse* to admit this supremacy. If a man withholds the wages of a servant who refuses to work for him, he will surely either keep them to himself, or pay them to another who *will* work for him, but in reality there is no payment in the question. I know the Dissenters are apt to cast in the teeth of your clergy, that they are *paid for their preaching*; though in reality they are the *only ministers of religion* in England who are *not*. All dissenting teachers *are* dependent on contributions [illegible]

the plate,—on the letting of pews in chapels,—, or, in some other way, on the wages their congregations choose to pay them. On the contrary, that which is paid to the clergy of the Church of England is *not* paid, in the same sense of the word; any more than a legacy is paid by an executor, *whose property it is not*, nor ever was. And the Church of England has the same equitable title to what she now possesses, as colleges, hospitals, and other such institutions, have to their respective possessions. The projected London University might as well claim a share of the revenues of Oxford and Cambridge, and of the Scotch and Irish universities, (of none of which the civil magistrate is the academical, but only the civil ruler,) as the Dissenters could of the property actually *in possession* of the Church. As for any portion of the national wealth which might *hereafter be set apart* for religious purposes, by all means let any sect come forward and urge its claims, and support them by such arguments as it thinks best. But that is quite a different question.

Πῶς, γὰρ τοι δώσουσι γέρας ————
Οὐδε τί τῳ ἴομεν ΞΥΝΗΙΑ κείμενα πολλά,
Ἄλλα, —— τὰ δέδασται·
Λαοῦς οὐκ ἐτέοικε ΠΑΛΙΛΛΟΓΑ ταῦτ' ἐπαγείρειν.

As for the *power* of the sectaries to make good such an unreasonable demand, it is to be hoped

that the government of Britain will never want either the will or the strength to protect one part of her subjects from being plundered by another. She might answer, and I trust *would* answer, to such claimants, "You have seminaries, chapels, minister's houses, and other such property for the benefit of your own religious communities; to which the Church of England lays no claim: why should you claim her property? It is true, your possessions are very small in comparison of her's: so are your numbers; but they are also, we allow, much less in proportion to your numbers. What then? If mere *inequality of wealth* is to be admitted as a ground for a *re-distribution*, there is an end of society. Any one of you who possesses any thing, must on that principle admit the claim of any poor man, who may urge that his neighbour has more than enough for a subsistence, and that he himself would be glad of a share: by which rule, a general pillage of the rich by the poor must ensue. Covet not, then, what belongs to another; but seek by honest means to provide supplies for your own wants."

Nothing could be more just than such a reply; and none, I conceive, would be more likely to be given: for the British government has always shewn a laudable caution in meddling with the rights of her subjects, whether individuals or corporations, to their actual property. And when legislators once come to perceive clearly that the

State would be a gainer by the emancipation of the Church, I think they will be ready to concede it, without making the sacrifice of her revenues the price of it; since they are well aware, that when once a precedent is given, the fashion of spoliation is of all infections the most apt to spread.

Of the consequences, however, which may be expected to ensue from the adoption of such measures as I have been recommending, I will take a more detailed view in another letter.

LETTER VI.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE EMANCIPATION OF THE CHURCH.

MY DEAR ———

THE principal effect I should look for from the adoption of such measures as I have been recommending, is, the blessing of our great Master upon your endeavours to further the proper objects of his heavenly kingdom. He has promised that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" and that He "will be with it always, even unto the end of the world:" and each particular branch of his Church ought to rely on that his promise, so far, and so far only, as they comply with his injunctions, and conform to the spirit of his Gospel.

I am not one of those, however, who look for miraculous interferences; but I conceive that God has so appointed things, that a diligent compliance with his will, as it is the condition, shall be also the *natural* means, through the ordinary course of his providence, of obtaining that success which is its promised reward. If, indeed, we were in any case unable to perceive in what manner a conduct

mity to the divine laws could tend to bring about the ends proposed, it would yet evidently argue a culpable want of faith to hesitate, for that reason, in obeying them: but in the present instance it *is* possible to understand, in great measure, the natural tendency of a system of conduct carefully modelled upon the precepts of the Gospel, to promote those objects for the sake of which the Church was instituted; viz. the immediate one, of purity of worship; and the ultimate one, the salvation of souls. I have already given several hints of this in the preceding letters; and I will make it clear, I trust, in almost every point, that the Supreme Controller of human affairs has so admirably conformed his system to the nature of man, that the most exact and implicit observance of the spirit of his directions will be ever the most effectual way of accomplishing the designs proposed; even where man, trusting to his own judgment, would have thought far otherwise: and that all departures from such principles, and adoption of such means for maintaining and promoting true religion, as the most ingenious human policy can devise, never fail to defeat the end in view. And from this consideration, by the way, may be inferred the divine origin of our religion; at least, which comes to the same, that it is a system contrived by some intellectual power surpassing that of the wisest legislators: for otherwise, it would have prescribed means for the

attainment of its proposed objects, such as political ingenuity would dictate: if, therefore, we find, on the contrary, such a mode of procedure enjoined by its Founder and his apostles, as human ingenuity would consider not the wisest and most effectual, — if we find skilful men in all ages departing more or less from the principles of the Gospel, in their endeavours to further the cause of Christianity, either from overlooking those principles or distrusting their efficacy, — if we find that in proportion as they have done so, they have failed of their object, — and if we find, on reconsidering the matter, under the guidance of experience, that there is every reason to expect better success from a closer conformity to the principles that had been abandoned, — if, I say, we find all this to be the case, we cannot refuse our admiration to the superhuman wisdom of the Founder of our faith; and we may urge against the infidel, without fear of refutation, that had Jesus been a mere human pretender, He would have directed the adoption either of such a system as human wisdom would suggest, or else of such an one as would fail of the objects proposed: 'instead of which He has prescribed rules, of which, even when suggested, scarcely any one ever has understood the expediency; and which men, when trusting to their own judgment, have always departed from; and which yet appear, upon trial, to be the only ones that prove effectual.

This is an argument which appears to me nearly decisive. For suppose but the case of a master-builder, a physician, or other artist, dictating such a mode of procedure to those under him, as appears to them quite inadequate and unsuitable to the proposed object; most of them accordingly disregard his directions, and try their own way; they succeed very ill; and then, on reconsidering the matter, — reflecting on the causes of their failure, — and observing the better success of those workmen who had adhered more implicitly to the method pointed out to them, — they are at length convinced that this, and this alone, will secure the proposed object: will they not then have, on the best grounds, the fullest conviction, that the master knew, much better than any of them, how to accomplish his purpose? And would they not, I may add, unless strangely stupid and perverse, place the most undoubting confidence in him for the future, even in other cases where they might not perceive the wisdom of his designs?

How detrimental to the cause of true religion, have proved many of the measures adopted with a view to promote it, — measures devised by self-sufficient man, and at variance with the principles of the Gospel, — I have, in several instances, pointed out; and in so doing I have adverted incidentally to some of the advantages to be looked for, on the principles of mere human calculation,

from a quite opposite course. But it may be worth while to sum up, and present to your consideration, in a more connected manner, some of the principal of those benefits. It must be remembered, however, if we would come to a right conclusion on this point, *what the objects are* that the sincere followers of Christ ought chiefly to aim at; viz. not the mere increase of the number of nominal Christians—the augmentation of the crop by an admixture of tares, or the loading of the "net cast into the sea," by augmenting the multitude of the worthless fishes that are to be thrown away,—but the increase of the numbers, and of the moral excellence, of sincere Christians; —the "coming" of Christ's kingdom" in the hearts of men, and the doing of "his will on earth as in heaven." In this way it is that the Church may be in reality gaining ground, when, at the first glance, it might appear to be falling back.

The first and principal advantage, then, which, through the divine blessing, I should expect to accrue to your Church from a closer adherence to the principles of the Gospel, is an increased purity in the faith, the worship, and the conduct of her members. No longer paralysed by unfitting aid from the "arm of flesh," she would be enabled without incurring the guilt and the odium of persecution, to enforce primitive discipline; and, in the last resort, to expel, as *all other religious socie-*

ties do, that are not dependent on the State, those who were obstinately disobedient or incorrigible. This restoration of ancient discipline, your Church (in the Commination-service) speaks of as "much to be desired;" and Warburton also lays it down as an indubitable principle, that every society must have the right of excommunicating a member who will not comply with its regulations. It is a pity that those who drew up that Commination-service never considered *what it is that prevents* the wished-for restoration of discipline; viz. that it is the *secular support*, by which it was meant to be enforced, but which in reality has brought it to nothing; since any enactment which would bring a man within the reach of temporal penalties for religious offences, would be both odious and unchristian.

Again, reforms and alterations,—the improvement of what is good, and the correction of what is faulty, which must always be needed, from time to time, in any institution conducted by fallible men,—might be introduced, as they were needed, without difficulty and without risk.

I am far from wishing for any thing like a "radical reform" of your Church,—a complete change of her system, or even any approach to it: but were she even infallible, which is not pretended, alterations must be required from time to time, to meet the changes which take place in different periods of society; since that which is

the best conceivable institution when enacted, cannot possibly always continue so. Indeed, I think the great error of all radical reformers consists in this; that they expect their reform, when once made, will last for ever, and prove an eternal barrier, not needing repair, against the abuses excluded; and yet it is plain this never could be the case, even were their schemes as perfect as they themselves suppose, while men continue to be fallible and frail, unless revision and correction from time to time took place. "Things change for the worse," says Bacon, "of themselves; if then they be not, by design and counsel, changed for the better, what end will there be of the evil?" There is on record a good reply to a Papist by a Protestant, from which Protestants themselves might learn more than they do: when asked, "Where was your religion before the time of Luther?" He asked in return, "Did you wash your face this morning?" "Yes." "Then where was your face before it was washed?" This ought not to be regarded as a mere witty repartee, but a just description of the case: and it would have been well had it been always remembered, that our faces do not require merely to be washed *once for all*, but every day.

Under such a system as I would recommend, you might rectify or improve whatever might need it, without any more difficulty or hazard to the revenues of the Church, than the universities, for

instance, incur, when they alter, from time to time, their statutes; as I believe the university of Cambridge has done lately, and that of Oxford some years ago, in what regards the course of academical studies, and the terms to be kept preparatory to degrees; without any jealousy excited in the members of the administration, or risk of the college-endowments; and without any idea being entertained that Government had any thing to do with the matter.

You, on the contrary, are even in a greater strait than the Church of Rome; whose pretence to infallibility only compels them to maintain, in *theory*, that each of their institutions *was* perfect at the time when it was established; whereas you have to maintain, in *practice*, the unerring rectitude of your own, not only originally, but *for ever: they* may say, "this is *no longer* expedient;" but *your* institutions are like the "law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not," even after two or three centuries. For you *cannot* alter any thing *without* the co-operation of the civil power; and *with* it, you are too wise to take any such steps; lest when once called in, it should do more than you would wish. You are well aware that those who are "set to judge in things pertaining to this world," may as likely as not be "those who are least esteemed in the Church,"—persons not necessarily better qualified to decide upon *your* concerns, than many a parish minister is to be a

minister of State; — persons who, perhaps, have little interest or knowledge about any thing belonging to the Church, except its *property*. And you well know that it is dangerous to make any of your institutions matter of public legislative discussion, between two parties, most of whom usually agree in regarding the clergy as hired servants of the State, no less than military officers; and who only disagree as to the question, whether others may not be found to do the work cheaper, that they may seize upon the overplus. Of course you will not understand me to mean that any one is *necessarily* the worse moral man, or the worse Christian, or the worse theologian, for being a politician; but neither is he necessarily the better. If any one doubts the possibility of finding in eminent statesmen the grossest ignorance of the doctrines and institutions of the Church of England, let him read the speeches in parliament on the Catholic question.

I am by no means disposed to expect that any institution conducted by fallible men will ever attain perfection; but as long as you are continually labouring to approach towards it, and *keep the means in your hands of rectifying* abuses as they arise, and of introducing such improvements as are called for, it is to be hoped that your endeavours after Christian excellence will be graciously accepted: not so with those who are content to put it out of their own power to apply any remedy,

where it may be called for, in the affairs of a society committed by its Founder to *their* care, and not to that of the temporal authorities.

But here I must remark, that there is a most important distinction relative to the present head, which should never be lost sight of in our discussions relating to it; the distinction, I mean, between the two questions, what institutions are on each point the *best;* and, what is the *authority* by which they should be established. An error in respect of the *thing* enacted, and in respect of the *power* which enacts it, are each to be avoided indeed; but they are errors of two very different kinds, and should not be confounded together. If, for instance, any free and independent Church, suppose the American episcopalian, have any error in doctrine or in discipline, sanctioned by her regular spiritual authorities, *that* is *one* kind of fault: if, again, *congress*, or *parliament*, should *enforce*, even true doctrines and wise regulations, *that* would be *another* kind of fault; and it is this last which constitutes the encroachment on Christ's kingdom. This distinction, so generally overlooked in the present case, is, in political affairs, clearly perceived. If an injudicious law were to pass both houses of parliament in Britain, and receive the royal assent, though this law ought indeed to be altered or abrogated, yet *till* then it would be in all respects valid; and the enactment of it would not be a violation of the

constitution: but, on the other hand, if the wisest enactment rested only on the authority of a royal *proclamation*, the attempt to enforce it as a law would be strenuously and justly resisted, as *unconstitutional*. And equally unconstitutional, with reference to the constitution of Christ's spiritual kingdom, are all enactments relative to doctrine and discipline, — in short, to spiritual concerns emanating from secular authority. With regard to these, therefore, we ought not to entertain the question relative to their propriety or impropriety, only in the case of those which rest on independent spiritual authority.

It is evident, that for bishops to have, as such, and by virtue of their office, a seat in the house of lords, is inconsistent with the principles which I have been pointing out; and this, which many would reckon among the sacrifices called for by the adoption of the system I would recommend, I should reckon among its advantages; since, besides its intrinsic unlawfulness, as making Christ's kingdom a secular one, it answers no purpose so effectually as that of giving a *sanction* to that state-interference which it is insufficient effectually to control. Something might be said, perhaps, on views of worldly expediency, if the bishops had a *veto* on all questions affecting the Church; but as it is, their power is, in furthering the interests of the Church, inconsiderable — in giving a colour to any encroachments on it, but too great. In-

deed, the situation of most of those, both temporal and spiritual officers, who have spiritual control over your Church under the existing system of alliance, frequently reminds me of Lord Bacon's remark on witches, in respect of their supposed compact with evil spirits, — that it gives them abundant power to do *mischief*, but none at all to do good. Many a man who has it in his power to connive at, and support, and increase abuses, if he attempts to *remedy* them, finds his hands tied: to hold up the doctrines, and discipline, and authority of your Church to contempt, is in the power of many; but who is able, if disposed, effectually to support them?

If, however, any peer of parliament thought fit to take holy orders, and the officers of the Church to ordain him minister, or bishop, this would be no encroachment on the rights of Christ's kingdom, which does not *recognise* any temporal distinctions; in it "there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free;" and consequently, birth, wealth, temporal office, or any other temporal distinction, cannot, in themselves, have virtue either to *admit* any one to the exercise of any spiritual function, or to *exclude* him from it. And it is equally, *in itself*, allowable for the king to create any minister or bishop a peer, if he thinks fit: and so it is, *in itself*, nothing unlawful for any electors to choose a clergyman as their representative. I have already noticed the

preposterous anomaly of *excluding* from the house of commons every clergyman, though he may have no cure, or a very small one, and at the same time putting a bishop, who *must* have enough to occupy his time *necessarily*, in possession of a seat in the house of peers. Whether it would be in any case compatible with the duties of a clergyman to sit, supposing him otherwise entitled, in either house, is a question which the *Church* ought to decide: it is her concern. In the legislature it is most unjust either to appoint or exclude any one, *as* a clergyman; they having, in reason and equity, no more concern with his *ordination*, than with his *degree in arts*. But when any one's ecclesiastical dignity *gives* him civil power, or, *vice versâ*, his civil office gives him ecclesiastical, *this* is, so far, making Christ's kingdom a kingdom of this world.

The Church, as a *Church*, *i. e.* as a spiritual community, has no concern with secular government; nor ought even to be represented in parliament. It has *property* indeed; and *that* being a temporality, may very properly be represented; but not through the means of bishops, or of any *Christian officers*, as such. It is thus that the universities are, very suitably, represented in parliament; not *as* places of *learning*, but as corporations possessing *property*: and accordingly it is enacted, not that the *professors*, or the rector or chancellor, should, in those capacities, have seats

in the house; but that all the students, or whatever they may be who have a share in the joint-property, should elect whom they think fit to represent that property. They *may* elect as member one of the professors, if they think him a fit person; but it would be absurd to make the Greek or the Latin professor (especially if appointed by the crown), *by virtue of his office,* the representative; since the most learned man, and the best qualified to deliver lectures, may happen not to be the best qualified for a place in the legislature.

There is nothing improper, therefore, in allowing holders of livings, whether lay or clerical, to be accounted freeholders, since they vote in right of the *property* they possess,—their stake in the country, whether they are lay impropriators or officiating ministers; not by virtue of *ordination.* The mode, however, in which they vote, scattered thinly as they are through the country, reduces their influence to little or nothing: and as tithes and glebe (under which I include all such lands as, having been Church property, are tithe-free) constitute a description of property in many respects distinct, it would perhaps be more fair that it should be distinctly represented. If, instead of members being returned by the universities, each graduate in any of them were entitled to vote as a freeholder in the county of which he was a native, or a resident, or in which his university holds

property, the *university-interests* would be but ill represented; and the influence which those *bodies* have, and ought to have, would be frittered away. I think, therefore, that the fairest representation of Church property would be, for the holders of it, clerical and lay, to elect in each diocese, or other appointed district, one or two representatives of the Church property within that district.

I recollect a suggestion in an essay on the tithe system,* which struck me as very judicious;—that these holders of ecclesiastical property in each district, should be empowered also to appoint, in each, a committee, chapter, college, or whatever else it might be called, which should receive a legal incorporation, and be accounted, as a body, the owner of that collective property, or of all that the holders of it within that district might choose to put into their hands; they distributing to each his proportionate share of the total revenue, as colleges and chapters do to their fellows, canons, &c. The object proposed by this arrangement was to do away, which I think would be the result, most of the inconveniences of tithes, which, as it is, are a perpetual source of bickering between the minister and his parishioners; and to remove most of the obstacles now existing to their commutation for lands. The supreme head on earth of each branch of Christ's

* Essay on the Tithe System. Hatchard, London; and Parker, Oxford, first published in No. 16, British Review.

Church, should evidently be some *spiritual* officer or body. Whether the governor of the English Church were the primate, or the convocation, or both conjointly, or *any* other man or body of men, holding *ecclesiastical* authority, not attached to any civil office, nor in the gift of any civil governor,—in either case, the non-secular character of Christ's kingdom would be preserved. The king, in conjunction with the other branches of the legislature, ought to have a distinctly defined *temporal* authority over every one of his subjects, of whatever persuasion; and, of consequence, over the ministers and all other members, both of the Church of England and of every other religious community, Christian, Jewish, or Pagan, within his dominions: but neither he, nor any other civil power, should interfere with articles of faith, liturgy, Church discipline, or any other spiritual matters. The kingdom of heaven has no king but Christ; and he delegated his authority to apostles, and, through them, to bishops and presbyters; not to any secular magistrates. These therefore ought not, by virtue of their civil offices, to claim the appointment to any offices in the Church. The magistrate may, however, very fairly exercise patronage in respect of *temporalities;* selecting, out of those *already* ordained by the Church, whom he will for appointment to certain endowments. He may rightfully say,—"You have consecrated this man a minister, I choose to appoint him to such

and such a benefice." *That* is no encroachment on the rights of the Church. But it would be so were he to *ordain* (or, which is the same thing, compel others to ordain) any particular person a priest or a bishop; though one who is already a bishop he may institute to a particular see. This translation, however, of bishops from one see to another, though no *encroachment* on the spiritual rights of the Church, I hold to be so highly *inexpedient*, that I would have the Church prohibit bishops from accepting such translation. If, however, the Church thought fit to ordain many more bishops than you now have, to act as assistants (of which there is very great need) to the bishop of each diocese, it would be very allowable for the magistrate to appoint one of these, whichever he would, to any vacant see, either with or without the form of an election or *recommendation*. But no royal recommendation should be allowed to determine *who should be ordained* bishop, unless you come to the conclusion, and openly proclaim it, that a bishop has no *spiritual office* distinct from that of the presbyter, and, consequently, that the ordination of a bishop is a nullity. Let a man be selected for the office of bishop, either by the dean and chapter, — or by the other bishops, — or by the clergy of the diocese, — or by all the members of the Church, lay and clerical, — or, in short, in *any* way by the *Church*, as a church. All these modes cannot

be equally *expedient;* but what I mean to point out is, that none of them would be at variance with the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom.

A church constituted on these principles would combine the advantages at present possessed, separately, by your Church and by sectaries. A candid and intelligent by-stander can scarcely fail, I think, to remark, in contemplating the religious condition of your country, that you and the Dissenters possess each some advantages over the other. The Church of England has, generally speaking, a more learned and respectable body of clergy, from their superior opportunities of obtaining a good education, — from their not being dependent on wages paid them at the will of their congregations, — and from other causes. It has also a sounder and a more permanent system of doctrines: by "more permanent" I mean, that, instead of trusting every thing to the extemporary effusions of the minister, (the grand source of unlimited fluctuations in religion,) you have an excellent compendium of divinity embodied in your liturgy: I do *not* mean that it is any advantage to have a system that is practically *unalterable* for ever. A well-built house is much preferable to a temporary booth; but it is no advantage to a house that it should be incapable of *receiving repairs*. The Dissenters, on the other hand, have generally a greater degree of spirit and energy in their communities; not

merely from being the ex-party, but also from feeling, that whatever is done in respect of their religious affairs is done by themselves, as a spiritual body, not by an extraneous authority; and from the exercise of a mutual control, by their being able, in the last resort, to disown any member who might prove an incumbrance to their society. Your Church, in short, may be compared to a human body, more perfect as to the skeleton, and more beautifully constructed; but which, from languor of circulation, is become somewhat feeble in muscle, — incapable of throwing off peccant humours, — and ill qualified for energising with vigour, when compared with a frame less perfectly compacted, but possessing a more lively circulation and a more elastic activity. Both these classes of advantages then, freed from their accompanying deficiencies, would be possessed by your Church were it but conformed to the principles I have been laying down.

Another advantage, which I cannot indeed call a certain, but which I cannot help thinking a probable result, is the advancement of Protestantism both in your own and in Popish countries. Among other obstacles to its progress, one, I have no doubt, is, the jealousy felt by the ministers and other zealous members of the Romish communion, of the sacrilegious power (as they consider it) exercised by civil magistrates in Protestant countries over their respective churches. They

cannot bear the idea of surrendering the Church into the hands of the secular power. Many of them undoubtedly perceive great part of the errors of their own Church; and some of them probably suspect the validity of the Pope's claims to *universal* supremacy: but still, they would rather submit to that, even though an usurping spiritual power, than to that *secular* supremacy which they justly apprehend would be the only alternative. Remove this apprehension, by establishing the spiritual independence of the Church, and allowing due veneration for her divine authority, and you will have removed at least one great obstacle (I think the principal one) to the conversion of the Papist. As it is, one of their chief arguments is drawn from the secular character of your Church-government. If the Church in each country, they tell you, must needs have a supreme head, superior to its own bishops and archbishops, it is better that that head should be the pope, who at least is an ecclesiastical officer, than a king or a burgomaster.

The only disadvantage, as some would account it, to counterbalance the benefits of the proposed change, would be one which *I* should reckon among its advantages; viz. the loss, if it might be so called, of many insincere, nominal members of your Church, who have no real attachment to the society — no care for the objects it proposes — and whose conduct tends neither to its credit nor

to the support of its true interests. And such a loss would be a gain similar to what the mighty host of Xerxes would have experienced had he dismissed his useless multitude of camp-followers, and retained only his efficient soldiers.

The slight and hasty sketch I have given of the advantages which might be expected to accrue to your Church from a strict compliance with the spirit of its Founder's precepts, may be sufficient, I think, to convince any attentive and candid reasoner, that Christ and his apostles knew better what would conduce to the true interests of a spiritual kingdom than any of those ingenious but worldly politicians, who have always been endeavouring to improve upon the system *they* laid down. And this affords a strong presumption of the *superhuman* wisdom displayed by the first promulgators of the Gospel.

Should you adopt the main part of the principles I have laid down, and communicate them to any of the members of your Church, you would find many, I am persuaded, who would in most points agree with you, but would (most of them) express their fears, that what was good in *theory* could not be realised in practice. They would tell you that it would raise clamour, and would be attended with various dangers, to attempt any change in the existing system; though they would acknowledge, that had things from the first been contrived differently, it would have been far

better: but now, none but the most sanguine and wild enthusiast, they would say, can fail to perceive the universal confusion and ruin which would ensue from any attempt at a reform. Without stating, precisely, the process by which that ruin would take place, (for the timorous can seldom bring themselves to take a very deliberate and clear and distinct view of the objects of their alarm,) they would urge, generally, that objections would be raised — that statesmen would be alarmed — that churchmen would be divided — that the activity of sectaries would be aroused, — with a whole train of those undefined terrors which appal the imagination of the faint-hearted, and which they dress up in the specious garb of politic foresight. Some of these persons, perhaps, may be of the number of those who (like Paley) "cannot afford to keep a conscience;" who have prospects in the Church or in the State, which they are afraid of endangering by incurring the suspicion of being advocates of reform: "I thought to promote thee to great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." But others probably would be not self-interested, but merely timid; fearful of some undefined danger to the Church; and fearful of themselves incurring censure, obloquy, ridicule, violent opposition, and persecution; and would thus be withheld, by a general, indistinct dread of ill consequences, from practically assenting to what their judgment might

approve. I would ask such persons, Are these principles, or are they not, such as you are clearly *bound*, in duty to your Master, to advocate and to act upon, as you shall answer before him at the last day? You should decide this question first, before you even take into consideration the calculation of consequences, upon views of human expediency, in a case wherein you have express divine injunctions. If you decide this question in the affirmative, and yet refuse to act on your conviction, is it not that you would be willing to follow your Master, provided you were but not required to "*take up your cross*, and follow him?" Is not your fear of censure, and opposition, and ridicule, for obedience to his will, "being ashamed of him and of his words?" And is it not, consequently, to incur the risk of his being ashamed of you? The very notion of Christian faith excludes that of a distrust of Christ's power to support and prosper the endeavours of those who are ready to "leave all and follow him." I would say to one who dreaded lest he should sink amid the troubled waves of civil or religious contests, while walking over their surface to meet his Master who had called him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" Thou *wilt* indeed sink, if thou dost not rely firmly on his word to support thee! Take hold of Jesus, if thou art fearful, and he will help thee up.

But what, after all, are the mighty dangers so

much apprehended? The State, as we have seen, would lose nothing, and would gain much, in respect of the support derived from the loyalty of Christians, were civil interference in religious matters withdrawn. The security of the Church property, again, would not be endangered, as long as the principles of equity and good government should maintain their ground; and *on no other principles* can that, or any other property, be secure, *even now*. But it is feared, perhaps, that when the Church should exercise primitive discipline, excommunicating, as St. Paul enjoins, scandalous sinners, obstinate heretics, or pertinacious non-communicants, (by excommunicating, I mean excluding them from all intercourse in things pertaining to *religion*; not from receiving mere charitable offices, nor from the common intercourse of buying and selling, &c., which is allowable between a Christian and "a heathen man or a publican;") and when no fresh members should be admitted by baptism (except adults), without good and approved sureties for their being christianly brought up, — it may be feared, I say, that were all this done, a mighty defalcation in the numbers of your Church would take place. Those, as I have already observed, who were not sincerely religious, nor loyal subjects of Christ's kingdom, would "go back, and walk no more with him:" and in God's name let them go! "Fear not, little flock!" "The sword of the Lord

and of Gideon" accomplished, with three hundred men, a victory, of which he would have failed had he scrupled to thin his host by sending back those whose hearts failed them. The field is thinned, indeed, by the removal of the tares; but the wheat thrives the better without them: they may not indeed be rooted up by force, before the harvest: but if they will go away of themselves, you will gain in purity much more than you lose in quantity.

What then, you may say, are we called upon to do? To *separate* from the Church of England? Surely not: but to strive, in the first instance at least, and to strive earnestly and steadily, to *separate the Church* from the every way pernicious alliance with the State. I abhor schism: I would not urge you to be one of those who cause divisions in the Church; but it is no schism to divide the spiritual kingdom of Christ from the secular government, with which it has no natural, and can have no lawful connexion. As I formerly remarked to you, he who thinks his country enthralled by an unfair alliance with some foreign state, would be a rebel, should he at once throw off his allegiance, without, at least, having first done his very utmost to restore her to independence. Likewise does he incur the guilt of schism who, when his Church is involved in corresponding difficulties, at once renounces her, without having ascertained, by using the most

earnest and strenuous endeavours, that the case is entirely hopeless. The sectaries certainly deserve much blame for too hastily seceding; but, on the other hand, it must be confessed that your Church has been too backward in protesting.

Let churchmen then, not the *clergy* only, but all members of your Church who understand and who would promote her best interests, protest and petition, respectfully and modestly, but firmly and perseveringly, against the profanation of Christ's kingdom, by that *double usurpation*, the interference of the Church in temporals, and of the State in spirituals. The language of their petitions need not be offensive; and the matter of them would be in the highest degree reasonable. They might say, in substance: "We are convinced that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; — that, consequently, all interference of the Church in civil, or of the temporal power in religious concerns, is clearly at variance with our Lord's design, and what we cannot in conscience acquiesce in; we deprecate all imputation of disloyalty; we profess that devoted and conscientious submission to the civil power, *in all civil concerns*, which was taught and practised by the apostles; we are sincere friends both to the Church and to the State, though not to the unnatural and unhallowed union between them; the advantages to the government which statesmen have proposed from the subjection of the Church to the State,

we are convinced, and are prepared to prove decisively, would be much more easily and effectually secured, if all interference of this kind were withdrawn; we ask no protection or support for the Church from the government, except the defence of individuals from insult and persecution, and that security of property which is enjoyed by all hospitals, free-schools, parishes, and other such bodies; we feel persuaded, and are ready to maintain, that under such a system government would lose nothing except odium and trouble, and would be a great gainer in point of influence, security, and popularity; we doubt not the good intentions of the civil rulers towards the cause of religion, and *in their capacity of Christians* we invite their co-operation; but, *in that of rulers*, they may do the Church much harm, and can do it no good: as citizens, therefore, we ask of the government only that protection which it is bound to extend to all classes;—as a Church, we ask nothing of it, but TO LET US ALONE."

THE END.

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